METAPHYSICAL TRADITION AND THE PHILOSOPHIES OF VALUE

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Dedicated
To the Memory of
My Father And Teacher
To Whom I Owe
All the Three Debts of a Hindu
And My Mother
Whom I Can Hardly
Recollect

वर्णानामर्थसंघानां रसानां छन्दसामपि।
मङ्गलानां च कर्त्तारौ वन्दे वाणीविनायकौ॥

भवानीशङ्करौ वन्दे श्रद्धाविश्वासरूपिणौ।
याभ्यां विना न पश्यन्ति सिद्धाः स्वान्तःस्थमीश्वरम्॥

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C–159, Sector–C,
Mahanagar, Lucknow.

Raghuveer Singh
December 13, 2007

Publisher's Note

Conculding his epochal work (*The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*), Lord Keynes once remarked: "Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas." These words reflecting the darkening political situation in the nineteen thirties may hold true, in a much wider and more fundamental sense, of the whole power structure of the modern world; for it is the characteristic of our "democratic" "mass" society that the worst, unprecedented kind of exploitation is accelerated and tolerated rather in the name of certain universalistic "ideas", vested interest being in itself largely dependent on them for its shaping and holding. Now, in reality, these "ideas" are quite often pseudo-ideas without logical grounds or what Ivan Illich called "amoebic words": having no *definite choerent meanings*, they are thereby all the more exalted and pass current as a sort of "panacea" catchwords in the public, which then operate as the most effective collective "masks" for the exploitation actually being advanced. Critique of these pseudo-ideas is, therefore, the very vital task of

intellectuals in our time, though it is scarcely attempted in the mainstream social science—an example of such a pseudo-idea which has, to some extent, been "exposed" in the current social scientific discourse is the "idea" of "development".

Professor Raghuveer Singh is one of the very few social scientists who have unflaggingly put these "constitutive" pseudo–ideas of our own time to the thorough logical scrutiny. In doing so, he shows that exploitation of man and nature justified in the name of those pseudo-ideas is not an accidental *misuse* of them but an ineluctable manifestation—once embraced at the socio-civilizational level—of their inherent self–inconsistencies (or semantic "emptiness"). Indeed, how deeply and unaware our mind has been encroached upon by such pseudo-ideas can be gauged by the puzzlement to which most of us are likely to be susceptible when told by him that most common and basic words in our intellectual/political parlance like "value" and "human right" are precisely such pseudo-ideaa or being used as pseudo-ideas. The present work, *Metaphysical Tradition and the Philosophies of Value,* which presents a penetrating analysis of the fallacies of the "idea" of "value", is therefore a provocative work—probably as a monograph extensively dealing with the question, the first of the kind ever produced with reference to both the philosiphical and social scientific contexts.

Professor Raghuveer Singh's contribution in this realm can be said to be almost unique. However, it does not mean that he has propounded something new: indeed, the cardinal importance of his works lies in the fact that he has clarified that these pseudo-ideas are nothing but the various forms of sentimental *substitution* for the eternal metaphysical ideas: substitutes, by definition, both deny and counterfeit the original—hence their ineradicable internal self-contradiction. Thus his whole oeuvre is meant to be a beacon call to our reawakening to the perennial transcendent Truth—Truth which never ceases to be life-giving if we hearken to Its liberating message. And it is here that we find the great relevance of the present work to Gandhian studies, though apparently they may look two disparate issues: Mahatma Gandhi's lifelong mission was not so much a quest for a new "alternative model" of society or a "revival"of certain social forms as an effectuation of *metanoia*—turning of our whole being towards participating, again, in our transcendent Center—his vision of a normal society being its precondition and corollary. The present work of Professor Raghuveer Singh should, therefore, be best read in conjuction with Mahatma's radical iconoclasm against the major forms of modern "make-believe" set forth in *Hind Swaraj*.

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About the Author

Professor Raghuveer Singh was born in a small village in Ghazipur district of Uttar Pradesh in 1929. He was educated at the U.P. College, Benares (now Varanasi) and the University of Allahabad. He had an exceptionally brilliant academic career as a student having consistently a first class to his credit. After taking his M.A. degree in Politics from the University of Allahabad in 1950, he joined the Department of Political Science in the University of Lucknow. In 1963 he moved to the University of Gorakhpur where he served as Professor and Head of the Political Science Department till his retirement in 1989. He is now settled in Lucknow. (C–159, Sector–C, Mahanagar)

Professor Raghuveer Singh is an internationally known scholar in the field of political theory and the history of political philosophy. His article 'John Locke and the Theory of Natural Law' published in the *Political Studies* (Oxford, 1961) is widely acclaimed as an important contribution to Locke Studies, and is extensively quoted in the books and research journals along with the works of such distinguished Locke scholars as Raymond Polin, John W. Gough, John W. Yolton, P. Abrams, Hans Aarsleff, Richard Ashcraft and Martin Seliger. It is recognized as a valid and forceful critique of earlier historians of political philosophy like C.E. Vaughan, George H. Sabine and Leo Strauss

who found a fundamental contradiction in Locke's so-called empirical theory of knowledge, his nominalism and voluntarism and his political theory based on the premises of natural law theory harking back to Hooker and the medieval tradition. Professor Singh is counted among scholars like Polin, Gibson and others who find a basic unity in Locke's philosophy. He has proved from the original sources that Locke never took his critique of innate ideas to be an argument against natural law. The other important question in Locke's philosophy, the supposed conflict between his ethical intuitionalism or intellectualism and his voluntarism or hedonistic motivation to morality, was also resolved by Singh by distinguishing between obligation and motivation. As S. B. Drury has put it while interpreting Yolton and Singh, "the obligation to obey the law of nature has its foundation in God, pleasure and pain merely provide the motivation to abide by one's obligation."

In an earlier article on 'John Locke and the Idea of Sovereignty' (*Indian Journal of Political Science*, 1959) Professor Singh was concerned with an exposition of Locke's theory of Sovereignty. His argument was directed against scholars like C.E. Vaughan, Ernest Barker and H.J. Laski who had argued that Locke had no theory of sovereignty. Martin Seliger regards it as an important contribution and makes a especial reference to it along with the work

of A.V. Dicey, Lord Bryce and J.W. Gough for a critique of the distinction between legal and political sovereignty and "defence of Locke against confusion of issues" (M. Seliger *The Liberal Politics of Locke*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968, 326, note 13).

Professor Singh's later writings show that his work on John Locke was a prelude to the development and articulation of a broader and more philosophical perspective and overarching view of politics which became clearer in his essay on 'Herakleitos and the Law of Nature' (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, 1963) and his Presidential Address to the Indian Political Science Conference in Patiala (1978) titled 'Causality Meaning and Purpose in Politics.' which was also published in *The Review of Politics* (Vol. 47, July 1985, No. 3). In the paper on Herekleitos Natural Law was declared as "one of the central ingredients of *philosophia perennis*: In 'Causality, Meaning and Purpose in Politics', Professor Singh explains his own view in the following words:

> A purely humanist, Critical-Marxist or phenomenological "life world" or "language game" frame of reference cannot be the proper basis for the reconstruction of human sciences. We must go back to *philosophia perennis*. *Philosophia perennis* believes in the primordial and transcendental Unity of Being, relates man to the cosmic order, and sees all his actions as the

expression of the eternal and immutable principle of Reason, *lex aeterna.*

Further he says:

> The realm of action, *vita activa*, however, is not an end in itself. It cannot have meaning and purpose, cannot attain its full glory and splendor, unless it is illumined by *vita contemplativa*, unless the human discourse springs from the depth of Divine Logos, unless the love of man is inspired by the love of God, and unless the positive law of the land partakes of the immutable law of nature.

Professor Singh's other writings, perhaps most notably 'Traditional Wisdom and Modern Science as Paradigms of Political Discourse' (in *Political Discourse* ed. Bhikhu Parekh and Thomas Pantham, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987) explore and explicate the same thesis.

The present work is a fuller exposition of the same theme, the resuscitation of *Philosophia Perennis* in human thought and action. Its significance may best be understood in the context of the present crisis of civilization and the predicament of the modern man.

D.P. Singh

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Epigraph

ONE

No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener.

Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator" in *Illuminations*, ed. with introd. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992),70.

TWO

From one beginning rises all mankind;
For one Lord rules and fathers all things born.
He gave the sun his light, the moon her horns,
And men to earth and stars to grace the sky;
He closed in bodies minds brought down from high,
A noble origin for mortal men.
Why then proclaim your kin and ancestry?
Look whence you came and see who made you, God.
No man degenerate is unless through sin
He leaves his proper source for meaner things.

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. with introd. V. E. Watts. (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 90.

THREE

The truth is that the 'philosophy of values' cannot claim the least connection with any ancient doctrine whatsoever, save in indulging in very poor puns on the 'ideas' and the 'good', to which must be added yet other confusions—and rather common ones—such as that of 'spirit' with 'mind'; on the contrary, it is one of the most typically modern confusions, arising from the 'subjectivist' and 'moralist' traits noted above. It is not difficult to understand at what point it is thereby opposed to the traditional spirit, as is all 'idealism' moreover, the logical outcome of which is to make truth itself (and today one would also say the 'real') dependent on the operations of individual 'thought'.... But after all this, one may still wonder just what exactly is served by promoting this particular idea of 'value', thrust thus into the world like a new 'slogan' or, if one wishes, a new 'suggestion'. The answer to this question is also easy, if we simply consider that nearly the entire modern deviation could be described as a series of substitutions that amount to just so many falsifications in all orders.... One could say, in sum, that 'values' represent a counterfeit of hierarchy used by a world that has been led to the negation of all true hierarchy.

René Guénon, "The Superstition of 'Value' " in *Miscellanea,* trans. H. D. Fohr, C. Bethell, P. Moore, H. Schiff (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2001), 121-22.

FOUR

The distance between the necessary and the good is the distance between the creature and the creator.

Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* (London: ARK Paperbacks, 1987), 95.

FIVE

To make an inventory or criticism of our civilization—what does that mean? To try to expose in precise terms the trap which has made man the slave of his own inventions. How has unconsciousness infiltrated itself into methodical thought and action? To escape by a return to the primitive state is a lazy solution. We have to rediscover the original pact between the spirit and the world in this very civilization of which we form a part. But it is a task which is beyond our power on account of the shortness of life and the impossibility of collaboration and of succession. That is no reason for not undertaking it. The situation of all of us is comparable to that of Socrates when he was awaiting death in his prison and began to learn to play the lyre. . . . At any rate we shall have lived.

The spirit, overcome by the weight of quantity, has no longer any other criterion than efficiency.

Ibid., 140.

SIX

As far as the traditional doctrine of man is concerned, it is based in one way or another on the concept of primordial man as the source of perfection, the total and complete reflection of the Divinity and the archetypal reality containing the possibilities of cosmic existence itself. Man is the model of the universe because he is himself the reflection of those possibilities in the principial domain which manifest themselves as the world. Man is more than merely man so that this way of envisaging his rapport with respect to the cosmos is far from being anthropomorphic in the usual sense of this term. The world is not seen as the reflection of man qua man but of man as being himself the total and plenary reflection of all those Divine Qualities whose reflections, in scattered and segmented fashion, comprise the manifested order.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 165.

SEVEN

The Highest Truth, which lends itself to the light of supra-mental Intuition, is indeed one and indivisible, but it appears in diverse forms when looked at from diverse points of view corresponding to the capacities and tastes of individual Sādhakas. So long as the individualised consciousness asserts itself—so long as we are unable to dispense with "mind" as an organ of knowledge—it is vain to hope for the attainment of the *Absolute Truth.* Relative or partial truth is all that can be reached by human reason. And these relative or fragmentary truths, or aspects of the Absolute Truth, are held to be the immediate ends of the different systems of philosophy.

. . . . .

This Unity, of which Revelation is an expression, is transcendental. The Ṛṣis—the Sages and the Illuminatii—split up, by an apparent process of self-division, this Unity into concepts of symbolical knowledge, arranged them in a certain grade of increasing purity and laid them before the intellectual faculties to play with. If rightly pursued, these will result in a wonderful clarification of the intellect, when the "mind" will cease to work and vanish. On the bare soul, Truth will then dawn as flash of lightning, dispelling all doubts and uncertainties.

Mahāmahopādhyāya Gopinath Kaviraj, "The View-Point of Nyāya-Vaiśesika Philosophy" in *Aspects of Indian Thought* (Burdwan: The University of Burdwan, 1966), 76-77

Prologue

PROLOGUE

> Insofar as we participate in the memory of that (common and divine) Reason, we speak truth, but whenever we are thinking for ourselves, we lie.

In this memorable aphorism Sextus Empiricus summed up the philosophy of Herakleitos who was one of the greatest of the ancient Greek philosophers. In the same vein Xenophon remarked: "When God is our teacher, we all come to think alike." Properly understood, these profound observations may be taken as the most precise and deep prognostication of the crisis of the modern man and of the problematics and predicament of contemporary civilization. They also provide a clue to the explanation of the real nature of the crisis. Having cut himself off from the Primordial Truth or the Divine λογos, having forgotten his origin and destiny, in other words, having lost the consciousness of "Who He Is," or put more properly, having ceased to ask the most vital question "Who Am I?" which was central to the teachings of Ramana Maharshi, man deprived himself

of his unique position in creation as Imago Dei and degraded himself to the level of a bio-physical organism or neuro-physiological phenomenon, subject to the natural processes of reproduction, growth, decay and death. The Divine Word on which he was fed and which gave meaning and purpose to his earthly existence was completely effaced from his memory.[1] His real self was relegated to the limbo of oblivion and his false ego came to dominate his thought and action. René Descartes, the father of the modern philosophy in Europe, heralded the advent of the 'age of enlightenment' with the proclamation of his all too famous doctrine 'Cogito ergo sum,' the *locus classicus* of the modern rationalistic individualism and scientism. But this proposition, according to A. K. Coomaraswamy, was in fact "a *non sequitur* and non-sense; the true conclusion being *Cogito ergo EST* with

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1. Even modern scientists like Erwin Schrödinger have come to realize that "consciousness cannot be accounted for in physical terms. For consciousness is absolutely fundamental. It cannot be accounted in terms of anything else"; Walter Moore, *A Life of Erwin Schrödinger* (Canto, 1994), 181.

reference to Him 'who Is' (Damascene, *De fid. orthod.* 1; *Katha* Up, VI. 12; *Milinda Pañha* p. 73) and can alone say 'I' (Meister Eckhart, Pfeiffer, p. 261)."[2]

The aim of the Cartesian philosophy was the conquest and ownership of nature by means of the new science of mechanistic materialism based on the 'resolutive-compositive' method fashioned in the school of Padua. This new science was a distorted version, a 'residue' of the classical *scientia* or *theoria*. The ultimate aim of *scientia* was the contemplation of the Primordial Truth or the comprehension of the Eternal Wisdom of God. The sole concern of the new science, *Novum Organum*, was the acquisition of power and glory. Knowledge is power, said Bacon. Knowledge brought man immense power and possession, material comfort and vainglory, but it emptied him of spiritual content, besides generating forces of catastrophic consequences in the form of ecological crisis and nuclear holocaust which have

2. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *What is Civilisation?* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) 11 n. 19.

brought the world to the point of near extinction. Man lost his immortal soul but acquired unexpected mastery over nature. "And what shall profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

As we all know, man does not live by bread alone, though it is also true that as a physical being he cannot live without bread either. However, nowadays we are led to believe, reversing the old maxim 'Ought implies Can' into 'Can implies Ought,' that because man can live by bread alone (in the physical sense of living), he ought to live, rather must live, on bread alone. After all if he can fully enjoy his life here and now with material possessions that he can easily manage to have, why should he bother about something immaterial, abstract and transcendent? This attitude is clearly exemplified by our leaders and political masters who emphasise that quick economic growth would solve all our problems, without caring to explain what "all" means in this context. The excessive emphasis on material development tends to

undermine our belief in non-economic goods, or moral and spiritual qualities without which man, howsoever well-fed, well-clothed and well-sheltered, cannot attain his real humanity which partakes of divinity. It tends to obfuscate the truth that there is a hierarchy of goods in human life and spirit is always superior to body.

Bodily needs must be subordinated to spiritual ends. But the modern man, the *homo economicus par excellence,* is mainly a consumer of commodities and seeker of pleasure, and modern industrialism, the Mammon of modernity, has supplied him more goods than he can actually consume. Hence he becomes greedy and possessive. His lust for pleasure and possession is insatiable. Confronted with the abundance of commodities in the market, he is puzzled and bewildered. It is not he who chooses from amongst a multitudinous variety of goods offered to him by the market; rather he is chosen by them to satisfy the needs of the market economy. In other

words, the market determines his needs and tastes. These are not his real needs, but the needs induced and stimulated by entertainment and manufacturing industry by means of advertisement, subliminal projection and auto-suggestion. He becomes completely self-alienated and despite all his affluence and material satisfaction he is afflicted by "anxiety" "dread" "boredom" and meaninglessness of life, as the existentialists have shown. And as Marx said, "The philosopher, himself an abstract form of alienated man, sets himself up as the measure of the alienated world."

Yet man, howsoever degenerate and desolate, must needs have some beliefs, aspirations, desires and 'ideologies,' something to live and aspire for, to bear the burden of life. Devoid of Divine Wisdom he falls back upon some false "values," spurious ideologies, superstitions or 'counterfeit' of the Idea of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The latest of such modern superstitions is what René Guénon calls "the

superstition of values" which is preceded by such eighteenth-and-nineteenth-century superstitions as those of progress, of science and of life. It is the "superstition of value" with which we are mainly concerned in this little treatise.

Our conclusion is that the term 'value' is highly malleable and multivocal. It has no definite connotation and is devoid of any objective meaning. There is no "ultimate and transcendent standard of value which is fixed by the metaphysical nature of reality" (R. B. Perry). G. E. Moore, a philosopher known for his clarity and sobriety of thought, does not go beyond saying in vague and general terms that "by far the most valuable things which we know or can imagine are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as pleasures of human intercourse, and the enjoyment of beautiful objects . . . they are the *raison d'être* of virtue, that it is they . . . that form the rational ultimate end of human action and the sole criterion of social progress." We have examined other philosophers, with special reference

to John Finnis, who are either equally vague or inconsistent. We have dwelt at some length on value-realists or value-essentialists, especially Nicolai Hartmann and W. M. Urban who have been the major protagonists of the value philosophy in recent times. They have erroneously identified value with Platonic Idea of Good, and thus have created a great conceptual confusion. They have asserted the superiority of 'value' over Being or Reality which is absurd and stands in flagrant contradiction to Traditional Thought. As we have shown, we are in full agreement with Arnold Brecht's statement that "until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, 'value' was rarely used abstractly in the general sense that has become characteristic of the twentieth, so as to refer to anything that men consider valuable for whatever reasons, including ideal goods, such as beauty, justice, liberty, equality, and especially ethical aims and attitudes. While the adjective 'valuable' was readily applied to all these, the noun 'goods' rather than 'values' was used for non-economic objects."

In contrast to the modern philosophies of value we have made a plea for the recovery and resuscitation of primal Truth, the principial Unity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty as understood by Traditional Philosophy or *Philosophia Perennis* common to the ancient thinkers of all civilizations, both Eastern and Western. The meaning of Tradition has been explicated in recent times in the writings of great thinkers like René Guénon whom Ramana Maharshi called the "great Sufi", Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Frithjof Schuon, Marco Pallis, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and our late lamented friend Professor A. K. Saran. Tradition stands for the knowledge of Suprahuman, Transcendental and Eternal Truth, revealed to the prophets and saints and transmitted to mankind orally or through scriptures from ages to ages. The modern man has willfully deprived himself of this divine inheritance, but all ancient peoples and civilizations were deeply permeated by it. By 'ancients' we mean not the writers of the past, but the

"witnesses of that great, integral, all-embracing tradition of wisdom fed by the Divine Logos which can be found in all ages."[3]

By way of illustration we can present the contrast between metaphysical wisdom, "Wisdom uncreate, the same now as it ever was and the same to be for ever more," and the modern theories of value by juxtaposing the idea of Justice as Fairness propounded by John Rawls, usually considered to be the greatest political philosopher of the twentieth century (at least in the Anglo-Saxon world with some notable exceptions), and the teachings of Socrates. For Rawls it is not necessary for a theory of justice to postulate a particular quality or philosophical vision of life. His theory is 'political not metaphysical.' One may adopt any view concerning the *telos* or the ultimate end of life. What is needed is that everybody should have equal access, subject to certain conditions, to the "primary goods" or values which are wealth, position,

3. Joseph Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation,* trans. Richard and Clara Winston (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), 46.

opportunity and bases of self-respect. Despite all its grandiloquent phraseology of deontology and "Kantian Constructivism" in moral theory, Rawls's theory is at bottom a rationalization of the values, lifestyle and institutional structure of the modern liberal or neo-liberal societies of the Western world. It is not based on any universal and objective moral principles, but rests solely on the self-interest of individuals capable of bargaining on fair terms which are mainly procedural in nature. The aim is to minimise the maximum losses and maximise the minimum gains of each individual in a situation of uncertainty and under the "veil of ignorance" about his position in the society emerging out of the 'original contract.' Basically Rawls's theory is a kind of utilitarianism, albeit rule-utilitarianism.

As against this, we would like to refer to Socrates's conception of good life. In the *Apology* he says (29d-30a):

> My good friend . . . are you not ashamed of caring for money and how to get as much as you can, and for honour and reputation,

> and not caring or taking thought for wisdom and truth and for your *psyche*, and how to make it as good as possible? . . . I go about doing nothing else but urging you, young and old alike, not to care for your bodies or for money sooner than, or as much as, for your *psyche,* and how to make it as good as you can.[4]

Here the word *psyche* means 'soul,' "something in us which is capable of attaining wisdom, and this same thing is capable of attaining goodness and righteousness" (Burnet).

In the tenth book of the *Ethics* Aristotle says, exactly like Herakleitos and Socrates: "It is not by virtue of our humanity that we can live this life, but in so far as there is something of divine in us."

In the present context one cannot resist the temptation of quoting the final sentence of *Apology* which remains unsurpassed in nobility of character and sublimity of thought:

> Now the time is up and we must go, I to death and you to life; but which of us is going to the better fate is known to none, except it be to God.[5]

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4. Quoted in W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy,* Vol. III (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1969), 467
5. Ibid., 479.

The philosophical and political valorization of values almost in a proselytizing spirit has become so pervasive and persistent that it may appear almost blasphemous to criticise it, let alone reject it completely, and instead make a plea for a return to *Sophia Perennis.* We are nowadays asked to promote value-based education, value-oriented politics; we are persuaded to inculcate values of liberty, equality and social justice, human rights and human development. Is it not most ironical and poignantly amazing that at the same time our "knowledge industry" is continually busy in churning out "human resources," that is "a stock or supply that can be drawn on" (OED), to supply the demands of international market economy controlled by the big industrial houses and multi-national corporations? We may call it by any name, the new economism, New International Economic Order, globalization, privatization or *Pax æconomica* by which Ivan Illich means "a balance between friendly 'economic powers'." But the net result is the death of man *qua* Man, created in the image of God.

Man, according to the current view, is for development; development is not for man. This is the age of *homo economicus par excellence,* and the development is measured in quantitative and economic terms. In former times education, the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, was meant for releasing man from worldly bondage, deliverance from the recurring cycle of births and deaths, known as *Mokṣā* or *Nirvāna. Yā Vidyā sā Vimuktaye.* Platọ regarded it as turning of soul's eye toward light. We have degraded ourselves so much as to pride ourselves of turning men into material objects or resources to be utilised by some fictitious non-human, rather inhuman entity, be it the nation-state or the globalized corporate economy serving the cause of *Pax Americana.*

Our purpose is to speak the truth even though it may offend those who prefer immediate gain and material consequences to theoretical principles which alone are of permanent importance. In our critique of value we have questioned some of the most

fundamental assumptions of the modern age. We have throughout followed the Socratic maxim: "An unexamined life (*anexetastos bios*) is not worth living."

मेरी ग़ज़ल नवा–ए–मआनी–ए–ज़िन्दगी
ऐशो–तरब की बात न रंजो–महन की बात

(Firaq Gorakhpuri)

In the course of our argument we have touched upon certain highly controversial problems, like Value-Fact dichotomy, Value-neutrality, Value-nominalism, Value-essentialism, Philosophical Absolutism and Philosophical Relativism. We have a rather extended discussion of Kelsen, not only because of his acknowledged eminence as a jurist but also because he is a most consistent positivist and one of the most relentless critics of metaphysical tradition. He is a normative positivist who believes in the purity of legal norms derived from the one Basic Norm. We have shown how Kelsen contradicts himself when he links philosophical absolutism to value-absolutism and

philosophical relativism to value-relativism while at the same time maintaining an unbridgeable gulf between fact and value. Our comments on the purity of the Pure Theory of Law and on the Basic Norm may be of interest to those who are interested in the logical consistency and philosophical complexity of Kelsen's theory. We have also taken up for consideration the latest views of Georg Henrik von Wright on "Is and Ought."

In our critique of value we have drawn heavily on the acute and profound analysis of Hannah Arendt which to our knowledge has not received from the scholars the attention it deserves. Arendt develops the insight of Hobbes who was perhaps the first among modern philosophers to note that "[t]he *value*, or Worth of a man, is as of all things, his price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependant on the need and judgement of another . . . . And as in other things, so in men, not the seller, but the buyer determines the price." Arendt also brings to the logical

conclusion Nietzsche's "transvaluation of values" and spells out most clearly the incompatibility between traditional "ideas" and the 'functional values' of the moderns. We have quoted Arendt at length because of the luminous clarity and depth of her observations on this subject.

In the last section of this book we have severely criticised and rejected root and branch some of the most cherished and much vaunted theories and 'values' of the modern liberal civilization. The writer of these pages has dwelt in greater detail on human rights and development in separate studies elsewhere. Here the presentation is brief but quite sharp and categorical. About the concept of Freedom of Choice we have emphatically said that there is nothing like absolute freedom of choice. The seductive illusion of the concept arises out of our ignorance of 'Who We Are' and of whose freedom we are talking about. Can a man have freedom of choice before he himself is free? The word 'choice' is ambiguous. Do we make a choice to choose? If our choice is absolutely free,

there is hardly anything to choose from amongst the alternatives available to us. We have only to pick up arbitrarily one thing or the other. And if we have really to exercise our choice, it must be based on discretion and sound judgement. In this case also there is no freedom of choice. We must choose what ought to be chosen in the light of our enlightened Reason.

"Freedom is choiceless awareness" (J. Krishnamurti). One who knows the Truth is absolutely certain of what he ought to do and he need not waver amongst competing alternatives. "'Free to choose': But in reality, the man who is conscious of his interest and concerned with his happiness has no choice; the purpose of freedom is to enable us to choose what we are in the depths of our heart."[6]

Then there are the concepts of human rights and human development which are generally regarded as the most vital values of modern civilization. The concept of priority of rights (over duties), of right-

6. Frithjof Schuon, *To Have a Center* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1990), 38.

based morality (J. L. Mackie) and the doctrine of *Taking Rights Seriously* (Dworkin) are not only absolutely false in logic but extremely hazardous in practice. They result in a reign of ceaseless strife, violence and terror. In the din and bustle of claims and counterclaims the sense of duty and obligation is completely lost. After all, when rights are given axiomatic priority or made the major premise of a social order, everybody would be first concerned with his own rights or claims. How can anybody's claim demand obligation on the part of the other party? The priority of rights thesis results in a virtual Hobbesean state of nature where there is "war of all against all," and "force and fraud" are the cardinal virtues of the state of nature. The contemporary political and social scenario in India and the world in general clearly illustrates this.

The contemporary writers in political science have completely changed the meaning of the word 'right' which originally meant *rectus* or cor-rect.

Earlier 'right' was comprehended under the more general concept of Dharma, Duty, Righteousness or Plato's Idea of justice (*dikaiosynē*). Individual rights were "merely the shadows cast by (the other people's) duties." According to Hegel,

> It is uncultured people who insist most on their rights, while noble minds look on other aspects of the thing. Thus abstract right is nothing but a bare possibility and, at least in contrast with the whole range of the situation, something formal. On that account, to have a right gives one a warrant, but it is not absolutely necessary that one should insist on one's rights, because that is only one aspect of the whole situation. That is to say, possibility is being which has the significance of also not being.[7]

We could multiply quotations from Karl Marx,[8] Jeremy Bentham and from writers representing other schools of political philosophy in support of our contention. But on this question Simone Weil (whom political philosophers ought to have known better) must

7. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right,* Trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 235 (Addition 23 on para. 37).

8. "Thus none of the so-called rights of man goes beyond egoistic man, man as he is in civil society, namely an individual withdrawn behind his private interests and whims and separated from the comunity"; Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," quoted in Jeremy Waldron, *The Right to Private Property* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1990), 104.

have the last word:

> To posses a right implies the possibility of making good or bad use of it; therefore rights are alien to good. On the other hand, it is always and everywhere good to fulfill an obligation. Truth, beauty, justice, compassion are always and everywhere good.[9]

As regards the theory of development, we have only to say that development *per se* is a popular non-sense. In nature there is nothing like continuous, incessant and linear development as ordinarily understood.

The most recent modification of the idea of development under the term 'sustainable development' is a clear admission of the fact that there is something basically wrong with the concept. It suggests that sustainability is an essential component of development. But it is not adequately realised that sustainability puts a limit to development and this deprives the word of its main thrust and élan. The phrase 'adjective is the enemy of noun' is fully applicable here. Development *qua* development is not

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9. Simone Weil, *Selected Essays 1934-43,* trans. Richard Rees (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 24.

viable or even desirable either ecologically or socially and politically. Without an ultimate end, *telos*, or divine entelechy—and this is conspicuous by its absence in the modern theories of development— development can only be an alluring illusion, a popular slogan, and an endless drift in the dark leading to unforeseen destructive consequences of unimaginable proportions. What the term development really means to those who use it to entice people to support them in their (mis)adventure of reconstructing society by means of science and technology to bring peace and prosperity in the word of misery, rampant corruption and violence, is not the perfection or development of man as such, but the development of material conditions of physical comfort, wealth, power and prestige. In this connection it is pertinent to remember Plato's famous aphorism:

> One who serves the body, serves what is his, not what he is . . . . One who only knows the body, knows what is man's, but not the man himself.

Aristotle also thought that wealth is only a means to a moral end; as such a means it must be necessarily limited by the end, neither more nor less than what the end requires. The end is a life of virtue and contemplation of Truth. This is what Aristotle called *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia*, however, is not just happiness, in the ordinary sense, as the English translation with its hedonistic overtones seems to suggest. "The essence of happiness consists in an act of intellect" (St. Thomas). "The happy life does not mean loving what we posses, but possessing what we love." "What else does happiness mean, if not this: knowingly to possess what is eternal?" (St. Augustine)

There is in fact no such thing as human development. We must be absolutely clear in our mind, as Gandhi certainly was, that greater industrial and technological development can only result in the ever widening chasm between the rich and the poor and the exploitation of the common man, workers in the fields and factories by the technocrats and ruling

elites, the brokers of power and seekers of fortune. The greed of man is insatiable and those who are already in positions of power and in a state of affluence can satisfy their ever-growing greed only at the cost of the good of the common man, the poor and the impoverished. The policy of our own government to acquire rather forcibly fertile agricultural lands of the poor farmers, their only source of livelihood, at a cheap rate, and give them to industrialists to develop Special Economic Zones (SEZs), giving them all possible facilities to serve their vested interests, including preferential tax treatment leading to the loss of revenue for the exchequer and tending to accentuate regional imbalances and aggravate uneven economic growth is a case in point. The ruling elites pretend not to see the connection between the suicide and death of the farmers from hunger and disease in the most industrialized states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, and unhindered policy of globalization and privatization. And they shamelessly swear by the name of social justice without any qualm of conscience.

What is most needed to-day is goodwill, not technical skill, metaphysical wisdom, not scientific knowledge. For modern science by its very nature and methodology is essentially technological and is incapable to grasp the Idea of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. It is quite alien to the virtues of compassion, sympathy (in the sense of *sympathes* in Plotinus) and love, and especially the idea of the Ineffable or Unspeakable (*anirvachaniya*, अनिर्वचनीय), notwithstanding the changes that have recently taken place in the old concepts of matter—from the Galilean-Newtonian conception of matter as conglomerate of inert, discrete, minute particles called atoms or indivisibles, to the discovery of more and more subtle and intractable particles in addition to protons, electrons and neutrons ("a particle zoo" as some physicists have called it): Einstein's photons or particles of light, called also 'quanta of action', 'Bosons' and 'Fermions' obeying different statistical laws (Bose-Einstein and Fermi-Dirac statistics).

More to the point and revolutionary in nature may appear to be de Broglie-Schrödinger theory that matter and light have wave-like structure, the idea of 'wave-light' duality as being irreducible to single reality, Bohr's theory of 'complementarity,' Heisenberg's theory of 'uncertainty,' Bohm's theory of 'Implicate Order' emphasising the interconnectedness of all natural phenomena, Bell's theorem rejecting the principle of local causes and the whole notion of locality as commonly understood, and, above all, the view of Heisenberg that for modern natural science "there is no longer in the beginning the material object, but form, mathematical symmetry . . . 'In the beginning was the word, the logos'," and Schrödinger's view that the whole set of galaxies and the universe itself is *māyā* "albeit maya in very interesting form establishing law of great regularity," and other conundrums of modern physics which obscurely seem to imply a truly spiritual or metaphysical view of

Reality.[10]

Recent advances in physics despite all their metaphysical orientation and aversion to simplistic materialistic view of Reality still remain quite

[10] As René Guénon says, where there is a question of modern science one is solely in the presence of profane science. Nasr makes this point quite clear. "Through all the important transformations in modern science from Newtonian mechanics to Bohm's implicate order, it is the scientific understanding of the order of nature that continues to dominate the contemporary scene so as to make a dialogue with the authentically religious view of nature difficult if not well nigh impossible. . . . *The truth remains that no matter how much it changes, modern science cannot but deal with phenomena, whereas the religious understanding of the order of nature is based ultimately upon knowledge of the ontological reality and root of things in the Divine and the significance of their form and qualitative characteristics on the phenomenal plane as reflecting noumenal realities belonging to the Divine Order";* S. H. Nasr, *Religion and the Order Of Nature* (New York: Oxford Oxford University Press, 1996), 152 (emphasis added). For the views of Heisenberg and Schrödinger quoted above, see S. H. Nasr, *Man and Nature* (London: Mandala Books, 1976), 45-46.

Einstein's own puzzlement about physical sciences was expressed in a letter he wrote to Erwin Schrödinger in 1935. "The real problem," Einstein says, "is that physics is a kind of metaphysics; physics describes 'reality.' But we do not know what 'reality' is. We know it only through physical description. . . . But the Talmudic philosopher sniffs at 'reality,' as at a frightening creature of the native mind"; (quoted in Arthur Fine, "The Natural Ontological Attitude," in *The Philosophy of Science,* ed. David Papineau (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 33.

impervious to the subtle and profound distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. "Things apparent are the vision of things unseen" (Anaxagoras). "The sensible world is a reflexion of the spiritual world in the mirror of matter." "And that which proceeds from Soul to irradiate Matter is Nature" (Plotinus).[11]

व्यतिषजति पदार्थानान्तरः कोऽपि हेतु–
र्न खलु बहिरुपाधीन्प्रीतयः संश्रयन्ते । (Bhavabhūti)

When it comes to the question of applying scientific knowledge to man and his destiny, his social and political life and institutions, the methodology of science becomes absolutely obtrusive and obstructive. For its logic proceeds by way of dichotomization between the subject and the object of knowledge. The logical syntax of the very question "what is X?" posits a fundamental and irreducible distinction between the knower and the known,

11. William Ralph Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1948), vol. I, 152 and 156.

knowing and being. If the scientist, anthropologist or sociologist asks "What is Man?", man is objectified and thereby he is dehumanised, that is, reduced to something non-human like any other object in the natural world. If the questioner is a man—and that is only a contingent fact—the object of inquiry is not a man in the same way as, when a man says that this is a table, he in effect says that what he is talking about is something other than himself. In other words, the questioner is in no way involved in the answer. If the questioner is a man, the 'man' about whom the answer is given is man only in a Pickwickian sense. As a matter of fact, what is involved in any inquiry about man is the self-reflexivity of human consciousness, man's quest for the knowledge of himself: Know Thyself. This is also the Delphic injunction. The real question is not "What is Man?" but "Who Am I?" a form of inquiry made famous in our times by the great sage of Arunachala, Shri Ramana Maharshi. It is the apophatic mode of knowing Truth, or essence (*Ousia*) of Man, through the *via negativa* of neither/nor, *nēti nēti*—I

am not a body, I am not a mind, I am not this, not that, and so on—and when it is pursued resolutely and relentlessly to its ultimate end, the individual ego ceases to exist, the self of man, *jivātmā* is merged into the Universal Self, *Parmātmā*, which is Beyond Being (*supra-esse*) but is at the same time the fount of all Knowledge and Being. Here Knowledge and Being become identical. "To know is to be" (Parmenides).

Modern natural and social sciences rupture this vital relationship of identity of Knowledge and Being or Reality and thereby cause the self-alienation and world-alienation of man. Man's outward activities, his powers, talents and his social and political institutions cease to have any integral relationship with his essence, his Real Self, and lose all authenticity, meaning and purpose. The harmony between man and nature is jeopardised and man becomes willfully ambitious, aggressive and possessive. Knowledge is transformed into ideology and various value-systems emerge to fill in the gap caused by the loss of faith in the divinity of man and immortality of soul. In fact

the modern man is doubly alienated. He has cut himself off from his Divine provenance and God's Mercy and Grace that sustain him and, furthermore, he is alienated from the world that he has now to encounter as a hostile object which he has to conquer and subjugate for his own physical survival and material prosperity on pain of rendering it ecologically uninhabitable and apocalyptically catastrophic. The complete control and mastery of nature by man is not only impossible in fact but illogical and ontologically inconceivable in principle, for that would require man's power to create the whole world *ex nihilo*, something which cannot be imagined and envisioned.

Man is thus called upon to choose—by definition as it were—between the outward and the inward; the outward is compressive dispersion and death, the inward, dilating concentration and life. Our relationship with space furnishes a symbol of this hostile nature of outwardness: by launching himself into planetary space—in fact or in principle—man becomes enclosed in a cold, despairing, mortal night, with neither up nor down and without end. Moreover, the same is true of all scientific investigation that goes beyond what is normal for man in light of the law of equilibrium that rules him ontologically. By contrast, when man advances towards the inward, he enters into a welcoming and peace-giving limitlessness,

fundamentally happy although not easy to achieve in fact; for it is only through deifying inwardness, whatever its price, that man is perfectly in conformity with his nature.[12]

In the light of the above it is not difficult to understand Tolstoy's observation that even if all scientific problems were to have been solved, the question of human life would not have even been touched. Wittgenstein, undoubtedly one of the greatest philosophers of modern times, has also a dismissively critical view of science:

> The truly apocalyptic view of the world is that things do not repeat themselves. It is not absurd, e.g., to believe that the age of science and technology is the beginning of the end for humanity; that the idea of great progress is a delusion, along with the idea that the truth will be ultimately known; *that there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge and that mankind in seeking it, is falling into a trap.* It is by no means obvious that this is not how things are.[13]

In a similar vein G. H. Hardy, one of the greatest mathematicians of the twentieth century, pertinently remarks:

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[12] Frithjof Schuon, *Survey of Metaphysics and Esoterism,* trans. by Gustavo Polit (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1986), 42.

[13] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value,* ed. G. H. von Wright, trans. Peter Winch (Oxford, Basil Blackwell: 1980), 56e (emphasis added).

A science is said to be useful if its development tends to accentuate the existing inequalities in the distribution of wealth or more directly promotes the destruction of human life.[14]

Human virtues mentioned earlier, compassion, sympathy, etc. are divine attributes. This does not mean that scientists are not men of virtue; it only means that they are virtuous not because they are scientists, but because they are humans. The craze for technology is the dis-ease of modernity. And the triumph of technology is the defeat of man. We are already at the brink of total ecological disaster and nemesis is going to overtake us soon. Stephen Hawking is not prepared to give us a reprieve for more than a hundred years so far as the survival of humankind and the earth is concerned. (It is another matter that his claim to have solved all (other) problems of the world can hardly make sense to a non-scientist who does not speak the language of algebraic

[14] G. H. Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 120.

equations and scientific formulas.)[15]

The dis-ease of technology and its evil effects cannot be cured by better technology whatever be the belief of the common people. That would only aggravate the problem. It cannot be too much emphasised, and it must also serve as a grave warning to those who are blissfully ignorant of the real nature and immanent logic of modern (profane) science and technology and are befuddled by their apparent, immediate success, that technology and human good or happiness are altogether different things. In the ultimate analysis they contradict each other. If we can use a current philosophical jargon, to join them together would be like making a category mistake. "To talk about a wise use of machines, of their serving

[15] "The trouble concerns the fact that the 'truths' of the modern scientific world view, though they can be demonstrated in mathematical formulas and proved technologically, will no longer lend themselves to normal expression in speech and thought. The moments these 'truths' are spoken of conceptually and coherently, the resulting statements will be 'not perhaps as meaningless as a 'triangular circle,' but much more so than a 'winged lion' (Erwin Schrödinger)"; Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959), 3.

the human spirit, is utterly chimerical. It is in the very nature of mechanization to reduce men to slavery and to devour them entirely, leaving them nothing human, nothing above the animal level, nothing above the collective level. The kingdom of the machine followed that of iron, or rather gave to it its most sinister expression. Man, who created the machine, ends by becoming its creature."[16] If one is interested in example, it would be enough to see, besides the imminent danger of nuclear holocaust and ecological disaster, the unforeseen and uncontrollable increase in cyber crimes following the revolution in information technology and cybernetics. The relentless development of technology causes schism in the soul of man and creates restlessness and inordinate desire for power after power and *hubris* to conquer the world to be its master and owner. Far from bringing peace, prosperity and happiness to man, it only succeeds in causing untold misery and destruction by destabilizing cosmic equilibrium and leading to desacralization of

[16] Frithjof Schuon, *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts,* trans. Macleod Matheson (London: Faber and Faber 1954), 21.

Reality and profanation of Knowledge.[17] The dis-ease and unrest can only be cured when man is at peace with his own Self. If man is created in the image of God, his real development, or rather end and perfection, his natural entelechy, is to be "dead and buried in Godhead" (Eckhart).

Ishrat-e qatarâ hai daryâ mein fanâ ho jânâ. (Ghalib)

This rather long introduction to such a short book might perhaps not be needed. My only apology is that I wanted to make myself a little clearer and more explicit. I hope the sympathetic reader would excuse me for the reiteration of some ideas both in the Prologue and in the main text on the ground that it is

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17 "All knowledge is by definition knowledge of the absolute Reality; which is to say that Reality is the necessary, unique and essential object of all possible knowledge. While it is true that there are kinds of knowledge which seem to have other objects, this is not insofar as they are Knowledge but insofar as they are modalities or limitations of it; and if these objects seem not to be Reality, this is so not insofar as they are the objects of Knowledge, but insofar as they are modalities or limitations of the One Object, which is God seen by God"; Frithjof Schuon, *The Eye of the Heart: Metaphysics, Cosmology, Spiritual Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1997), 13.

sometimes needed for the sake of emphasis on the issues of vital importance.

The book runs counter to popular ideas. At the same time it is meant to be strictly orthodox (*ortho* = correct ; *doxa* = opinion) in approach. It is firmly rooted in the belief that "[a] metaphysical doctrine is the incarnation in the mind of a universal truth. A philosophical system is a rational attempt to resolve certain questions which we put to ourselves."[18] The modern theories of humanism and of human values are the product of sentimentalism and they are devoid of true intellectuality. Human virtues can emanate only from the divinity and the immortality of the soul that is transcendent and absolute.

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18. Frithjof Schuon, *Spiritual Perspective and Human facts,* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1990), 11.

METAPHYSICAL TRADITION
AND
THE PHILOSOPHIES OF VALUE

It is by their ideas that we judge of what things ought to be like.
St. Augustine

What is good is divine too. That, strangely enough, sums up my ethics.
L. Wittgenstein

The worth of a man lies in his conciousness of the Absolute.
F. Schuon

I

The demise of Logical Positivism and the aftermath of what is known as the behavioral revolution in social sciences saw the resurgence of the concept of value in the modern European philosophy. The idea of value began to gain philosophical respectability and it was accepted as a vital component of political and social sciences in the period after the Second World War. There was a restructuring of social and political theory under the impact of the postpositivistic philosophies of science and the rise of new schools of linguistic analysis, hermeneutical understanding, phenomenological existentialism and Critical Theory. The "postbehavioral revolution" saw

its main achievement in the resuscitation of human values which had been either completely ignored by positivism and empiricism or relegated to the status of disguised factual statements expressing sentiments, preferences, exclamations, or commands, to be analyzed in scientific terms as factors in social causation and the explanation of behavior patterns of people in a given society. Analysis and elucidation of the language of morals called metaethics was of course considered a legitimate logical inquiry even by the positivists. A new science of axiology under the influence of Nicolai Hartmann in Germany and W. M. Urban, R. B. Perry, John Dewy, Dewitt H. Parker, Stephen C. Pepper, and others in the United States had come into being even in the heyday of logical positivism emphasizing values as a distinct and prominent branch of philosophy. Some value theorists, however, went to the extreme and asserted that values were not only an essential component of traditional metaphysics, *philosophia perennis,* but claimed that the priority of Value to Reality was an explicit and central feature of all classical thought. Thus W. M. Urban, following Hartmann, proclaimed that perennial philosophy was a value-charged scheme of thought, which recognized the supremacy of Good or Value over Reality or Being. And today there are people who think that even traditional Indian concepts

like *Puruṣārtha,* that is, *Dharma, Artha, Kāma,* and *Mokṣa,* and the Buddhist doctrines of *Nirvāṇa*, the Middle Way, and the Eightfold Paths can also be assimilated to the concept of value.

This, however, is a great mistake and it betrays a colossal ignorance both of *philosophia perennis* and the modern theory of value and valuation. In view of the much-vaunted notion of "value-based education" being emphasized at present in India and elsewhere, it has become all the more necessary to thrash out the whole question of values and put it in the proper historical context and philosophical perspective. It cannot be too highly emphasized that education aims at the cognition of truth, not the propagation of values, ideological or utopian, whether of the ruling elite or of the toiling masses. The present essay aims to deconstruct value theory, demolish the myth of the supremacy of Value over Reality, and to expose the fallacy of misidentification of Platonic Good and the "Value" of modern philosophers.This fallacy lies at the heart of modernity leading to the degradation of man traditionally conceived as *imago Dei,* created in the image of God, to the status of *homo faber* and *homo economicus* and then ultimately to *animal laborans.* The Good that the traditional man seeks is the eternal, immutable wisdom, St. Augustine's

"wisdom uncreate, the same now as it ever was, and the same to be for evermore."[1] It is the Logos of Herakleitos "by which all things are steered through all things,"[2] "the fixed measure" that keeps all things in their appointed place. The ultimate goal of life, *summum bonum*, is not value, but *paramārtha* as the Indian tradition would have it, the Truth of all truths or *satyasya satyam.* Value is at best the expression of the Promethean Man's transient, ephemeral, subjective, and contingent aspirations and strivings, desires and "interests" (Perry), or a set of deintellectualized, emotional value-structures comprising "pleasure-value," "life-values," and "holiness" (Max Scheler). They are all a complex blend of emotivism and pragmatism, psychologism and sentimentalism, occasionally tinged with moral intuitionism conjoined with additional vignettes borrowed from phenomenology and depth psychology. They are absolutely devoid of intellectuality and goodness, or Logos which includes both Reason and Reality. As Eric Voegelin has perspicuously observed, "[t]he essence of value theory is the transformation of the objective hierarchy of goods, with its *summum*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions* 9.10; quoted in Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 2: Selected Papers—Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 255.

[2] Herakleitos, Frag. 19 (version of the fragments according to the arrangement of Bywater's edition); cited in John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1930), 134.

bonum of transcendent completion, into human posits. The subject of the human sciences is held to be constituted by relation to current values, while the validity of these values can be established only by posit. As long as the method is used in a tradition-laden milieu, the danger is not so obvious, since the 'values' remain relatively close to the traditional objective hierarchy of goods. But if the method is used in a society undermined and infested with ideology, the result is as many definitions of the subject as there are ideological value posits. Science collapses into an apology for various ideologies."[3]

[3] Eric Voegelin, "Liberalism and Its History," trans. Mary and Keith Algozin, *The Review of Politics* 36, no. 4 (October 1974): 518.

II

It can hardly be gainsaid that the term "value," as also the concept of human values, constitutes an important component of the modern philosophical and political discourse. It may be said to be most ubiquitous, platitudinous, and malleable. In popular usage it is mostly exhortative and laudatory. The American philosopher, R. B. Perry attempts to develop a *General Theory of Value* (1926), in which such sciences as theory of knowledge, ethics, political science, and jurisprudence are to be unified and distinguished. However, the term "value" itself continues to be of a highly uncertain connotation and susceptible of divergent and conflicting interpretations. It is by no means clear, consistent, or univocal. It refers to a variety of ideas and objects which cannot be all assimilated into a clear logical category and reduced to a coherent, systematic theoretical formulation and philosophical conceptualization. The most common confusion is between value *of*, say, ø and

ø itself *as* a value. "Value" is used interchangeably and indiscriminately for a variety of moral ideas, norms, or principles, rules of conduct, human aspirations, objects of material satisfaction, or economic goods, forms of social and political organization like democracy, socialism, nationalism, and so on, and, at a still higher level, it stands for moral virtue and an estimable way of life. It may also refer to spiritual qualities like holiness, human qualities like magnanimity, and to social rites and religious injunctions. Rawls's "primary goods," liberty, opportunity, wealth, and the bases of self-respect, may also be called values though, according to Rawls himself, they are not integral constituents or defining features of any particular way of life which may be called valuable in itself. David Easton defines politics as "authoritative allocation of values" and here values include power and prestige. To G. E. Moore, "by far the most valuable things which we know or can imagine are certain states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse, and the enjoyment of beautiful objects . . . they are the *raison d'être* of virtue; that is, it is they . . . that form the rational ultimate end of human action and the sole criterion of social progress."[4]

[4] George Edward Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 188–9.

From these extremely vague, general, and subjective characterizations one may pass on to classical scholastic virtues, Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice or Plato's Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, and Justice, which are also sometimes called basic values. Likewise, one may also speak vaguely of the Hindu *Puruṣārtha* or aims of life, *Dharma, Artha, Kāma*, and *Mokṣa* as values. This only shows the extreme difficulty of giving a precise, logically coherent, definitive concept of value. It appears as though the term "Value" is some sort of Gladstone bag which can accomodate any desirable object or idea from the most worldly wants and carnal desires, social arrangements, manners, and habits to sublime spiritual attainments like *Mokṣa* or salvation. Indian logicians would call this an instance of *ativyāpti doṣa*, a fallacy that infects most of such facile and vague generalities. On the most basic philosophical plane, it must be said once and for all that there can be no common measure between the earthly and material good of man and his final end which lies precisely in transcending it. Acquisitiveness (*parigrah)* and the spirit of renunciation (*tyāg)* do not have a common denominator. The modern value philosophy confounds the two and this is its fatal, most egregious infirmity.

A contemporary natural law theorist John Finnis regards values as "referring to a general form of good that can be participated in or realized in indefinitely many ways on indefinitely many occasions" as contradistinguished from "good" "referring to some particular objective or goal that one is considering as desirable."[5] He enumerates seven kinds of values —life, knowledge, play, aesthetic experience, sociability (friendship), practical reasonableness, and religion. It is not at all clear how the heterogeneous items mentioned in this list are related to one another to constitute a general form of good that can be realized in many ways and on many occasions—how, for instance, play is related to religion or to practical reasonableness— unless, of course, it is meant that all things in the world are somehow interrelated. This list is, moreover, not exhaustive. There may be many more values that men seek. Curiously enough, the author excludes courage, generosity, moderation, gentleness, and so on from this list of basic values. He says that "they are ways (not means but modes) of pursuing the basic values and fit . . . a man for their pursuit."[6] Obviously, the

[5] John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 61.

[6] Ibid., 90.

author conflates widely different categories, and combines all kinds of desirable objects, and makes no clear distinction between material conditions or means of life and the ideals of good life. He does not adequately deal with the vexing problem of fact and value.

A thorough examination of Finnis's theory is neither possible nor necessary here. But since it epitomizes a number of confusions and distortions in the modern theories of value and their relation to traditional metaphysics, a few comments are surely in order. For one thing, Finnis dissociates values from their principial base, metaphysical principles and/or human nature, and leaves them hanging in the air without their entering into an integral relationship with one another. The plurality and incommensurability of values that he posits militates against the traditional Socratic-Platonic theory of the unity of virtues and the identity of Truth and Goodness, and violates the Parmenidean idea of the identity of Knowledge and Being which runs through the whole of traditional thought. For another, Finnis postulates a realm of "practical reasonableness" (*phronésis*) as the source of the validity of values apart from and independent of contemplative wisdom (*theoria*).

Moreover, practical reason is also regarded as a kind of value among the seven enumerated by Finnis. Thus the source of value itself is made out to be a kind of value. Apart from this logical self-contradiction, it must be noted that Finnis regrettably forgets that in Aristotle practical reason is never divorced from theoretical reason (*Nous*). Aristotle's Contemplative Mind is said to be the "Mind of the mind," "Thinking of thinking" or the "non-discursive principle of discursive thought." And contemplation is regarded as the end of action, its very *raison d'être. Vita activa est disposito ad contemplativam.* Finnis also contends that all values are of equal status and it is ultimately the free human choice that determines what value a man should pursue in a particular situation. Though he admits that the validity of a value is in no way dependent on choice, yet choice must enter as a necessary factor in the process of valuation. This is certainly to ignore the intractable problematics of freedom of choice. If a choice is absolutely free, wholly unconstrained by reason and purpose, it is purely arbitrary and there is hardly anything to *choose* between alternatives available to a person; if on the other hand, it is based on any reason or sound arguments, one has to choose only the best among the possibilities open to him. In either case there is no

choice. Further, do I choose this thing or that or do I *choose to choose it* which would involve me in *infinite regress*? "But what is it I choose?" asks Søren Kierkegaard. "Is it this thing or that? No, for I choose absolutely, and the absoluteness of my choice is expressed precisely by the fact that I have not chosen to choose this or that. I choose the absolute. And what is the absolute? It is I myself in my eternal validity. Anything else but myself I can never choose as the absolute, for if I choose something else, I choose it as a finite thing and so do not choose it absolutely."[7]

[7] Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1959), vol. 2, 218. According to Aristotle, choice involves deliberation, but deliberation is about means, not about ends: "Obviously what is chosen is voluntary, but not everything that is voluntary is chosen. Well, is it the result of previous deliberation? For choice implies a rational principle, and thought. The name [*proairesis*], too, seems to indicate something that is chosen *before* other things." "Since, therefore, an object of choice is something within our power at which we aim after deliberation, choice will be a deliberate appetition of things that lie in our power. For we first make a decision as the result of deliberation, and then direct our aim in accordance with the deliberation"; Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1976), 117 (3.2, 1112a14–17; brackets added), 120 (3.3, 1113a9–12).

According to Boethius, " 'freedom to will or nill' is the work of reason; while the so-called act of choice according to which we 'do what we like' is not an exercise of free will at all but an irrational and passive reaction to external stimuli; and . . . as St. Thomas says, the operation of reason or the mind (insofar as the latter really acts) is 'above time' "; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Time and Eternity* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1988), 115-16.

The trouble with Finnis is that he remains hovering between two contradictory points of view. He clearly places himself in the analytical school of jurisprudence, but at the same time he endeavors to go beyond it by incorporating some elements of the natural law tradition without its metaphysical underpinnings—the transcendent, immutable reality and the idea of the Great Chain of Being and an objective world order. Thus he falls between two stools. Metaphysics and positivism can only be juxtaposed; they cannot be harmonized without changing their basic premises. Finnis trades on the notion of "practical reasonableness" without explaining whether it is "practice" or "reasonable- ness" that he wants to emphasize in case of a conflict between the practical and the reasonable. For want of an ontology of values or goodness in the classical sense, Finnis fails to forge a conceptual link between the objectivity of values and the contingency and historicity of the experience of desire and choice.

The influential American philosopher R. B. Perry talks of the "realms of value" and includes in these realms areas of morality, the arts, science, religion, economics, politics, law, and custom and etiquette where values could be found. It is indeed difficult to abstract a clear and determinable idea of value from amongst the plethora of meanings attached to the term "value" in current literature. There are material

values, aesthetic values, scientific values, political values, moral values, nutritional values, practical values, and so on. In this confused welter of divergent and even incompatible meanings, it is not clear what is invariant in these various forms of values except for their antimetaphysical stance which is either implied, or clearly stated as in Dewey's pragmatic ethics, Moore's *Principia Ethica*, and C. I. Lewis's *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation.*[8] It is interesting to note that Lewis not only categorically rejects an "ultimate and transcendent standard of value which is fixed by the metaphysical nature of reality," but clearly separates the questions of value, which, according to him, are a matter of empirical knowledge, from ethical questions which cannot be determined by empirical facts alone.[9] In this way values are narrowly defined with reference to human satisfaction, and ethical norms of right and wrong, just and unjust are left unexplained from the viewpoint of scientific and objective cognition. William K. Frankena is wary of using the term "value," keeping to more traditional terms like "good" and "right" (*Ethics*, 1963), and G. H. von Wright speaks of "*The Varieties of Goodness*" (1963) instead of values in general.

[8] Clarence I. Lewis, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* (La Salle, Ill.: The Open Court Publishing, 1976), 531.
[9] Ibid., 554.

III

The problem in value theory arises not only from the vagueness and indefinite generality of terminology, but also from its being embedded in certain controversial issues in modern philosophy and theory of knowledge connected with the so-called dichotomy of Fact and Value and the correlated problem of causality and freedom. As is well-known, the logical positivists who more or less dominated the philosophical scene in the first part of the last century, squarely divided all meaningful discourse into analytical-rational propositions of logic and mathematics on the one hand and synthetic-empirical propositions of physical sciences on the other, the first being necessary but devoid of factual content, and the second contingent but empirically significant or meaningful. Both these types of propositions were sharply contrasted with judgments of value which are on this view neither derivable from reason nor based

on experience. Ethics as a normative science was thus exorcised from the universe of meaningful discourse and was relegated to the limbo of metaphysical nonsense. Its practitioners mostly turned to metaethics, an examination of ethical terms and propositions and their logical interconnection. Philosophers like R. M. Hare (*The Language of Morals*, 1952) and Stephen Toulmin (*An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics*, 1950) and good-reasons ethicists tried, indeed, to find a place for reason and argument in ethics. But most of them—especially Hare who firmly adhered to what he extolled as "Hume's law on Is and Ought"—were in one way or another haunted by the ghost of Hume's infamous "guillotine," which was in fact never finally laid to rest, and their outlook displayed the same antimetaphysical and antinormative features as those of the logical positivists.[10] In a way, emotivism, prescriptivism, imperativism, and speech act theory were all forms of noncognitivism, even though they employed informal reasoning and admitted different

[10] There is no unanimity among modern scholars about the exact implication and intention of Hume on Is and Ought. See Alasdair MacIntyre's famous paper, "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'," *The Philosophical Review* 68 (1959); see also the related literature in *The Is-Ought Question*, ed. W. D. Hudson (London: Macmillan, 1969). MacIntyre takes exception to the accepted interpretation of Hume on Is and Ought.

"uses of argument." According to them, value judgments are not assertions or statements which ascribe properties to actions, persons, or things, and therefore, they are neither true nor false like statements of facts, either natural or moral. Psychologists and social scientists treated values and valuation as a matter of personal preferences, attitudes, desires, and needs to be taken into account as causal factors in individual behavior and social formation and action. Even where reason was considered necessary in the analysis of value, as in the pragmatic-instrumentalist theory of John Dewey which sought to give a quasi-objective status to values, it functioned only as a means or "procedural means" in the total framework of values which had no metaphysical or absolutist foundation. Dewey firmly rejected the idea of "ultimate values" in favor of belief in "plurality of changing, moving, individualized goods and ends."[11]

This kind of value-nominalism and value-relativism has been fairly summarized by Arnold Brecht who holds fast to the so-called "unbridgeable gulf" doctrine of the value-fact divide: "We only fool ourselves when we speak of ethical values 'as being

[11] John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), 162.

there,' independent of men, while expressing or admitting scientific doubt about divine forces. If values are objectively there, independent of men, then they are there by fiat of suprahuman forces. If science cannot establish, with scientific means, the reality of divine forces, neither can it verify the objective reality of ethical, or any other, values, independent of men. The objective interrelations of things may be independent of God and men, but human *values* can exist only in the minds of God or of men—or both."[12] If we deny that the idea of God has a scientific basis, the logical conclusion would be to regard values as relative to human beings and their desires and feelings. There is no independent existence of values from a purely scientific and rational point of view.

Arnold Brecht espouses the concept of "scientific value-relativism" or "scientific value-alternativism" which does not "deny that there may be absolute standards of justice, but only insists that they cannot be scientifically verified, and that science can contribute a good deal to a rational choice among standards by clarifying meaning and consequences; ...."[13] That value

[12] Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Bombay: The Times of India Press, 1965; originally published by Princeton University Press in 1959), 291.
[13] Ibid., 161.

judgments have no rational validity and cannot be scientifically proved or disproved is the firm conviction and declared position of many influential modern philosophers and jurists like Bertrand Russell and Hans Kelsen who hold that from the scientific point of view there are only human interests and conflicts of interests which can be resolved only by the use of force or by general agreement and compromise.

Thus we find that value-relativism, value-neutrality, or the notion of value-free science is the most fundamental assumption of the mainstream philosophical, moral, and juridical theories of the twentieth century. Max Weber, one of the greatest sociologists of modern times, did make an attempt to accommodate values in his *verstehen* approach, but ultimately he only emerged as a most sophisticated and stubborn champion of value-free science of society. Hans Kelsen, arguably the greatest juridical philosopher of the twentieth century ("unquestionably the leading jurist of the time," as Roscoe Pound called him) propounded a "Pure Theory of Law," divesting law of all factual, sociological, and moral considerations. But how pure is the "Pure Theory of

Law"? We know that ultimately Kelsen had to fall back upon the idea of a "minimum contentual" relation between law and social order in order to save his system of positive law or positive normativity from collapsing into absolute arbitrariness of a purely imaginary construction, unrelated to social reality. And he had to adopt this device in spite of the fact that for him the dichotomy between norm and fact was absolute and irrevocable. According to him, one cannot pass from what "is" to what "ought to be," from causal necessity (causation) to normative validity ("imputation").

G. H. von Wright ranks Hans Kelsen with Max Weber as the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century and regards the influence of these two giants as comparable to that of Karl Marx in the nineteenth century. Kelsen's vision of a *reine Rechtslehre*, a legal science uninfected by telelogical, moralistic, and sociological considerations was a magnificent achievement of legal positivism and was regarded by many as the decisive victory of positivism over the classical Natural Law Doctrine of the Greek and Medieval philosophers, continuing in one form or another till the last decades of the eighteenth

century.[14] The whole logico-philosophical structure of Kelsen's thesis is based on a strict ontological dualism of Is and Ought, of Reality and Value, and the success or failure of this huge intellectual enterprise, usually supposed to be the decisive refutation of the Natural Law Doctrine regarded as a fusion or confusion of Fact, Value, and Reason, would be quite instructive for the interpretation and criticism of the value theory as a whole.

In brief, our view is that Kelsen does not succeed in maintaining the purity of his "Pure Theory of Law." He is concerned with legal system as a normative order which he approaches from a purely transcendental or formal point of view—after all he is a neo-Kantian philosopher, not a natural scientist or a theorist of sociological jurisprudence. His conception of law is of a unified normative order logically derived from one Basic Norm. But this Basic Norm, the foundation of the whole juridical order, must be positive. Otherwise the theory would tend to merge with some kind of Natural Law. A legal system, unlike a

[14] See Otto Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society: 1500 to 1800*, trans. Ernest Barker (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957). Ernst Troeltsch's lecture on "The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics" included in this volume contrasts German thought with the thought of the Western Europe on this subject.

geometrical system, is not a wholly abstract construction which is only contingently related to the actual physical world. Law is a system of positive norms meant to be at least minimally applicable to the members of the society on whom it is intended to be binding and whose behavior it is supposed to control. In other words, besides its formal validity logically derived from the presupposed Basic Norm, it is necessary for it to have a minimum of material validity, that is, it must have at least a modicum of contentual relationship to the actual behavior of men for whom it is intended—a minimum of efficacy without which it would be purely arbitrary and hypothetical, wholly imaginary and vacuous. But law cannot have a material validity without forfeiting its formal character of purity, that is, its absolute independence of all ethical as well as sociological-psychological factors and empirical referents. Kelsen is here faced with a dilemma, a paradox of the highest magnitude, and he manages to escape it by a highly ingenious device. He makes a distinction between the psychological-sociological element in law and its purely formal or essential character, and says that minimum efficacy as a necessary factor in law is the *conditio sine qua non*, but not the *conditio per quam* of the legal system. Euclid's mind conceiving the

geometrical system that goes by his name was the *conditio sine qua non* of the principles of Euclidean geometry, but the act of his conceiving it, or the fact of his discovery of its principles, was in no way logically connected with the essence or the nature of the principles discovered. The content and the truth of the theory as such are quite different from Euclid's mind which conceived them. It is indeed true that the psychic act of thinking a mathematical theorem is not the *conditio per quam* for the validity of the content of the thought, and that the thought is independent of *thinking* of it. Thinking is its necessary condition only. It cannot uniquely determine the content.

The point, however, is that the analogy between geometry and law is not perfect. Euclidean geometry as a formal, axiomatic system retains its logical validity irrespective of its spatio-temporal reference—its inapplicability to the non-Euclidean space notwithstanding. But a legal system which is not at all binding on men for whom it is meant has no validity whatsoever. For law is a positive norm, and the legal system is a coercive order meant to be more or less effective according to Kelsen himself. The minimum contentual relationship between law and society or a minimum degree of efficacy is an

essential feature of all law. And this destroys the notion of the absolute dichotomy of Ought and Is and wrecks the structure of Kelsen's pure, idealistic positivism built on it. C. H. Wilson put the crux of the matter in his masterly essay on "The Basis of Kelsen's Theory of Law" written as far back as in the second quarter of the last century:

> Thus when Kelsen declares that a certain minimum of efficacy, that is, a certain minimum of observance of the legal rule, is a *conditio sine qua non* but not the *conditio per quam* for the validity of the legal order, he is, from this point of view, obscuring the logical issue. For the specific validity of the norm, an Ought, there can, indeed, be no *conditio sine qua non* whatsoever but only the *conditio per quam*, that is, another Ought. Thus neither time nor space can be looked on as conditions of normative validity. . . . If, however, a definite time and a definite space are necessary to the norm, then these must be included as essential elements in the concept of normative validity. The concept of validity would then unite elements belonging both to the sphere of existent reality (*Sein*) and to the sphere of essential, or pure obligation (*Sollen*). But on Kelsen's premisses this is inadmissible.
>
> The notion of efficacy, that is, translation of the norm into the sphere of temporal-spatial reality (*Sein*), is irrelevant to the proper validity of the norm, and to say that efficacy, minimum or maximum, is a *conditio sine qua non* of normative validity is a logically untenable position. Efficacy must be a *conditio per quam* or no condition at all.[15]

[15] Charles H. Wilson, "The Basis of Kelsen's Theory of Law," *Politica* 1, no.1 (February 1934): 68–9.

As Wilson rightly points out, there was no theoretic necessity for Kelsen to stop at the point at which the compulsive element of law (that is, its minimum efficacy) is declared to be unessential to its normative validity, and not to proceed to postulate a hierarchy of norms beyond the historically first constitution, whose basis is ethical-metaphysical. But that would assuredly have brought him nearer to the idea of *Naturrecht,* the specter that continually haunted his mind and arrested his speculation. He himself admitted that "[a]ll tendencies which aim at renouncing compulsion as unessential to law combine, in the last resort, to obliterate the distinction between natural law and positive law."[16]

[16] Quoted in ibid., 79 n. 1. "Kelsen's whole reasoning here is peculiar. First, we are told that the validity of the law is exclusively normative, and that no element of 'efficacy' can be regarded as essential to that validity. Then we are told, under the direction of the Mach formula, that we ought only to regard as valid an order which does in fact have a certain efficacy. But finally, again, this efficacy cannot be taken up as an essential element into the conception of the validity of the law, since that validity is purely normative. It is difficult to understand why more criticism has not been directed against this very dubious link of the Pure Theory of Law. In summary, there are the three main objections to the introduction of the Mach formula: (1) The arbitrary, non-positive, or in Kelsen's word, 'meta-juristic' nature of the introduction of this extra hypothesis; (2) the introduction of the formula solves nothing. There may be as many alternative, primary norms advanced to satisfy the formula as there are points of view; (3) the unavoidable suggestion of a pragmatic validity. See W. Jöckel, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-73, 181-8. In passing, I cannot recall any empasis on the Mach formula in the *Allgemeine Staatslehre*"; ibid., 77 n. 1.

The important point that emerges from a careful analysis of Kelsen's theory of the Basic Norm is that Kelsen himself is led by his own inexorable logic to a kind of Natural Law. Rudolf Stammler, a neo-Kantian like Kelsen, frankly acknowledges the existence of "Natural Law with a changing content." And H. L. A. Hart, although himself a legal positivist, talks of "the minimum content of natural law." Kelsen does acknowledge that "very little objection can be raised . . . [to regarding the basic norm] . . . as an element of a natural law doctrine . . . [but it is] . . . the minimum . . . of natural law"[17] without which a cognition of a legal system is unthinkable. He admits that the postulate of the Basic Norm is a transcendental-logical minimum of natural law. Harold J. Laski in one of his letters to Justice Holmes expressed the view that *Allgemeine Staatslehre* "put the Hegelian case with . . . great ability, even though its ability does not seem to me less disastrous."[18] Some writers have even

[17] Hans Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and State*, trans. Anders Wedberg (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945), 437; quoted in Richard Tur, "The Kelsenian Enterprise," in *Essays on Kelsen*, eds. Richard Tur and William Twining (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 167 (brackets by Tur).

[18] *Holmes-Laski Letters: The Correspondence of Mr. Justice Holmes and Harold J. Laski, 1916–1935*, ed. Mark DeWolfe Howe (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), vol. 2, 830; quoted in Tur, "The Kelsenian Enterprise," 174.

found striking similarity between Kelsen's Pure Theory of Law and Hegel's Philosophy of Right and Bosanquet's Philosophical Theory of the State.

Kelsen's view of the Basic Norm has undergone several changes over the years, and his paper "The Function of a Constitution," an essay prepared for a law conference in Vienna in 1964, acknowledges the similarity between his theory of the Basic Norm and Vaihinger's *Philosophy of 'As If,'* emphasizing the point that the Basic Norm is a fiction in the sense that it not only contradicts reality but also contains contradiction within itself.[19] The question whether this is an improvement on the previous position or not can be debated at length.[20] But the fiction theory of the Baisc Norm is contradicted by Kelsen's later doctrine that a norm is an act of will, the sense of which is a norm. Thus, as Ota Weinberger has argued, "even the normative character of the basic norm becomes fictitious, if we accept Kelsen's act-relative definition of the norm, that is, if the norm is defined as the sense of a real act of will. . . . A fictitious real act is a *contradictio in adjecto.*"[21]

[19] For thorough and critical analyses of Kelsen's philosophy of law, see *Essays on Kelsen* which includes this essay by Kelsen (109-19).
[20] See Iain Stewart, "Kelsen and the Exegetical Tradition," in ibid., 123–47; Richard Tur, "The Kelsenian Enterprise," in ibid., 149–83.
[21] Ota Weinberger, "Logic and the Pure Theory of Law," in ibid., 199.

At this point it may also be pointed out that Kelsen's general theory of philosophical relativism when riveted upon his own doctrine of fact-value dichotomy and value-relativism, obliterates the very distinction between fact and value as far as objectivity of knowledge is concerned. If all knowledge is relative to the knower, how can the knowledge of fact differ from the knowledge of value in its objectivity and certitude? It would be as relative and subjective as the knowledge of values. In this context it is pertinent to remark that though Kelsen makes much of it, there is no logical connection between his doctrine of philosophical relativism on the one hand, and the radical heterogeneity of fact and value and the related concept of value-neutrality on the other. According to Kelsen, philosophical relativism, as opposed to philosophical absolutism, denies that there is an absolute reality, that is, a reality that exists independently of human cognition. It "advocates the empirical doctrine that reality exists only within human cognition, and that, as the object of cognition, reality is relative to the knowing subject. The absolute, the thing in itself, is beyond human experience; it is inaccessible to human knowledge and therefore unknowable."[22] And this is

[22] Hans Kelsen, "Foundations of Democracy," *Ethics* 66, no. 1 (October 1955), part 2: 16.

simply the Kantian theory of knowledge which does not by itself necessarily entail a relativistic theory of knowledge and valuation—Kant is neither an epistemological nor a moral relativist. Kelsen himself does not draw any such conclusion concerning the knowledge of empirical reality whose objectivity and universality is guaranteed, according to him, by the assumption of the equality of individuals as subjects of knowledge and the equivalence of the processes of their rational cognition in contradiction to their emotional reactions called values.

Kelsen's theory is exremely ambiguous. In one sense, philosophical relativism is simply the doctrine that all reality in order to be knowable must be related to the knowing subject; in another sense it implies that knowledge of values, as contradistinguished from knowledge of facts, is relative because it depends not on rational cognition but on emotional reaction. It is not shown why empirical reality which is the object of rational cognition cannot at the same time be thought in terms of the good or value. This is all the more surprising in view of Kelsen's own assertion:

> To the assumption of absolute existence corresponds the possibility of absolute truth and absolute values, denied by philosophical relativism, which recognizes only relative truth and

relative values.... If there is an absolute reality, it must coincide with absolute value. The absolute necessarily implies perfection.[23]

This, though quite unconsciously, is an unequivocal renunciation by Kelsen of his own doctrine of the absolute disjunction between reality and value. It does acknowledge that absolute reality coincides with absolute value. The argument about the correspondence of absolute truth and absolute value to absolute reality would, by parity of reasoning, apply *mutatis mutandis* to empirical reality as well. If absolute reality and absolute truth imply absolute value, relative truth must correspond to some sort of relative value. How does the question of dichotomy of truth and value arise? In fact, Kelsen's reasoning is manifestly a *non sequitur.* In the last analysis, relativism as a general theory of knowledge and reality is self-refuting. It continually eats upon itself; its immanental meaning that there is no absolute truth or absolute reality contradicts the intensional meaning and correlative (absolute) truth of the proposition that all truth is relative. To say that all truth is relative is to deny what one affirms. It tends to abolish all absolute distinctions, of the absolute and the relative, of fact and value, and of truth and falsehood.

This rather detailed analysis is designed to show the logical untenability of Kelsen's radical dualism of

[23] Ibid., 16.

Is and Ought. But Kelsen's failure, precisely because of its remarkable clarity and logical incisiveness, is highly instructive. It signals the failure of a long line of modern thinking, from Hume ("a Scottish Kant") and Kant ("a Prussian Hume") to the modern logical positivists and radical empiricists, which Kelsen in a way has brought to its logical conclusion. It opens *a contrario* the way to the modern revival of the Natural Law Doctine which was the foundation of all law and morality in the classical and medieval period. Kelsen's arguments for the scientific validity and autonomy of jural norms are most subtle, thorough and uncompromising, and from their ultimate failure we can safely infer that the entire philosophical approach from which they spring is basically flawed and misguided.

Many thinkers of the Anglo-Saxon world like John Searle and Max Black made a valiant, rather desperate effort in the sixties of the last century to bridge the "unbridgeable gulf,"[24] or to find "The Place of Value in a World of Facts," to borrow the title of Köhler's famous book which attacked the problem of value from the author's perspective of Gestalt psychology. But as we have pointed out elsewhere, the attempt failed and simply turned out to be a fruitless question-begging

[24] Their essays (Max Black, "The Gap between 'Is' and 'Should' "; John R. Searle, "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is' ") originally published in *Philosophical Review* 73 (1964) are collected in *The Is-Ought Question* (99–113; 120–34).

exercise.[25] For we cannot logically derive the "ought" from the "is" without presupposing "ought" in "is." Once we decide to posit a radical dualism, an "unbridgeable gulf" between the world of Reality and the world of Value, the question of passing from the one to the other is foreclosed for ever. We cannot have the cake and eat it too. In an extended and thoughtful discussion of the problem G. H. von Wright has also criticized Searle and Black on sheer logical grounds. He rightly observes: "At no stage is there anything which could rightly be called the deduction of an Ought from an Is, i.e., of a norm from some facts."[26]

The relevance of deontic logic to the analysis and validation of norms has been widely recognized by writers in law and morality, though there appears to be no clarity on this point. Von Wright is one of the founding fathers of deontic logic. Earlier he was of the view that with the help of this newly discovered logic it would be possible to give a sound theoretical

[25] Raghuveer Singh, "Causality, Meaning and Purpose in Politics," *The Review of Politics* 47, no. 3 (July 1985): 390–410. Also A. K. Saran, "Some Aspects of Positivism in Sociology," in *Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology* (Washington, D. C., 1962) for an acute criticism of the fact-value dichotomy.

[26] Georg Henrik von Wright, "Is and Ought," in *Facts and Values: Philosophical Reflections from Western and Non-Western Perspectives*, eds. Marinus C. Doeser and John N. Kraay (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986), 42.

foundation to the theory of norms. And here he was at one with Kelsen who was rather overconfident that deontic logic would vindicate some basic tenets of his own "pure" theory of law comprising a closed, contradiction-free legal system. Of late, however, von Wright has come to have a second thought on the matter. He says that given that norms are neither true nor false—a doctrine which both Kelsen and he firmly hold—it is not possible to establish a deductive bond of entailment between norms and facts, or even between norms themselves. Kelsen himself believes that objective relation of inference applies only to declarative sentences, not to normative ones. If norms are neither true nor false, how can we hold a logical relation between them when we know that logic and logical deductions are about truth and falsehood only? Hence there is no question of contradiction/noncontradiction between norms. And deontic logic, as long as it remains a logic, can concern only descriptions and not prescriptions (norms) as such, that is, it is not a "logic" *sui generis* that "somehow transcend[s] the borders of truth and falsehood" as envisaged by Kelsen and earlier by von Wright himself.[27] And yet, von Wright maintains that the "gap" between Is and Ought is actually "bridged" without discarding the premise that norms are neither true nor false, and that deontic logic can serve the

[27] Ibid., 37–8.

purpose of clarifying the relations implied therein: "Deontic logic, to put it in a nutshell, is the study of logical relations in deontically perfect worlds. The fact that norms are neither true nor false constitutes no obstacle to this study. Deontic logic is not concerned with logical relations between prescriptions (norms) but with logical relations between the ideal states the descriptions of which are implicit in norms."[28] With reference to legal norms, von Wright says that the jurist "makes a proposal or recommendation about how the law should be understood. *The proposed content is stated in true or false propositions—but the proposal itself cannot be assessed as true or false.*"[29]

Summing up his position von Wright concludes:

> The function of norms, one could say, is to urge people to realize the ideal, to make them act in such a way that the description of the real approximates to the description of the ideal. In an important sense we could say that the purpose of norms is to "bridge the gap" between Is and Ought, although not in the sense of establishing a deductive bond of entailment between the two. Such a bond is out of question, cannot possibly exist—for the simple reason that norms are prescriptions and relations of entailment can exist only between descriptions or, if you wish, between propositions expressed by descriptive sentences.

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[28] Ibid., 39.
[29] Ibid., 39 (emphasis added).

> I am presumptuous enough to think that what has been said contains, *in nuce*, a solution to the much debated Is-Ought problem. *It is a solution which both preserves the underivability of the ideal from the real and accords to the existence of norms the same robust reality that other (social) facts possess.*[30]

It is extremely difficult to examine adequately von Wright's views in this essay which mainly proposes to discuss the place of value in metaphysical tradition. But since the issue is central to the theme of our discussion, it is only pertinent to point out briefly that von Wright's presumption is false and logically untenable. If the world is assumed to be neatly bifurcated into two separate realms of Is and Ought, what is there besides these two to "bridge the gap" between them? We will have to postulate a realm distinct both from Is and Ought in order to correlate them. But this is out of question in the context of the exclusive disjunction: $\sim(p \equiv q)$. If the ideal and the real are two mutually exclusive ontological categories, how can a relation be established between them and why should we "urge people to realize the ideal, to make them act in such a way that the description of the real approximates to the description of the ideal"? Here we plunge into complete irrationalism and decisionism in making sense of our actions. If the

[30] Ibid., 40 (emphasis added)

ideal is radically different from the real, how can the real approximate to the ideal? And why at all should we endeavor to pass from the real to the ideal if the ideal is not real? Furthermore, if, as von Wright consistently maintains, norms are neither true nor false—only norm-propositions or descriptions of norms can be said to have truth-value—how can their existence have "the same robust reality that other (social) facts possess," unless reality itself is devoid of truth?

Traditional thought cuts the Gordian knot by completely rejecting the absolute distinction between the Real and the Ideal, between Is and Ought. The Ideal, that is, what pertains to the Idea or Form of a thing, alone is Real. Tradition believes in the metaphysical Unity or Non-duality of Reality. This is exactly the Platonic position. The Ideal *is* Real and what we ordinarily call real, that is, "facts" of the phenomenal world, has only a pseudoreality. Facts become real only when they "participate" or "partake" in the immutable Form or Idea of which they are partial imitation at a lower, phenomenal level of manifestation. Modern axiologists like Hartmann and Urban were completely mistaken in identifying Plato's idea of the Good with what they called

"value." Nettleship put the matter very succinctly when he said: "The good is at once: first, the end of life, that is, the supreme object of all desire and aspiration; secondly, the condition of knowledge, or that which makes the world intelligible and the human mind intelligent; thirdly, the creative and sustaining cause of the world."[31] In terms of Aristotle's hylomorphism, matter is pure potentiality which attains actuality or reality only when it attains its Form. Natural objects like plants or animals, human artefacts, things of art and of daily use, and human action are real in the true sense of the term only if they conform to their respective forms; form imprints its reality on sensible objects. A lame horse is not a horse; a defective table is not a table and a misdeed is not a deed. That which is not made or done well, or is not fashioned according to the norm, is not really made or done (*a-kṛtam*). We cannot say that a teacher who does not teach (normally) is after all a teacher albeit not a good teacher; just as a triangle whose interior angles do not add up to two right angles is not a triangle properly so called. It is the universally accepted doctrine of *philosophia perennis* that "things apparent

[31] Richard Lewis Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 218.

are the vision of things unseen" (Anaxagoras)[32] and that there is a general philosophic distinction between the empirical knowledge which is contingent and valid for practical purposes and the principial knowledge which is eternally true and transcendentally valid.

The modern man is deluded by thinking that what is presented to his senses, what is tangible, objective, or "out there" is the "fact" which is indubitably certain and clear or scientifically intelligible, and that is precisely why it is real. On the other hand, what is not within the reach of sense-experience, or is not empiriologically conceivable is simply an ideal, or mental fantasy, idiosyncrasy, or an object of desire, aspiration, wishful thinking, which may or may not be realized. In any case it is not real. This is the crux of the Is-Ought dualism which is generally accepted as an axiomatic truth, and this has bedeviled the whole modern thinking and methodology of natural and social sciences since the rise of empiricism, scientism, and positivism. Many of us perhaps hardly realize that objectivity is only the other side of subjectivity. Truth

[32] Sextus Empiricus, Adversus dogmations 1.140, quoted in Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Time and Eternity (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1947), 7n.6.

transcends both of these modalities of existence. According to OED, *objectum* (plural *objecta*), the Latin word for object, means a "thing thrown before (mind)." It is only the modern "realists" who think that it is independent of mind. Seldom do people care to see that the little word "fact" which is supposed to be clear beyond doubt is itself highly problematic, multivocal, and ambiguous.[33] One may well wonder if there is any exact equivalent to this word in any classical language. In Latin it is *factum* which means what is made or "a thing done or performed." And Giambattista Vico who may be said to stand at the threshold of modernity in many ways, echoes this very meaning in his famous *verum/factum* doctrine. You can define a fact any way you like. A. K. Coomaraswamy puts this with luminous clarity:

[33] M. Cohen and E. Nagel in their well-known treatise, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, distinguish between four connotations of the word "fact": (1) "facts" referring to "certain discriminated elements in sense-perception"; (2) "facts" as "the propositions which *interpret* what is given in sense experience"; (3) "facts" as denoting "propositions which truly assert an invariable sequence or conjunction of characters"; (4) "facts" as denoting "those things existing in space or time, in virtue of which a proposition is true" or false. In this sense facts "are neither true nor false, they simply *are*: . . ." Only propositions about them can be said to be true or false; Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1934), 217-18. See also Frank P. Ramsey, *Foundations: Essays in Philosophy, Logic, Mathematics and Economics*, ed. D. H. Mellor (London: Routlege & Kegan Paul, 1978).

> Fact and fiction alike are "what we *make* of" our observations; neither is an absolute, or more than a useful *façon de parler*, neither are any but statistical proofs available for the recognition of fact or fiction. Truth itself is transcendent with respect to fact and fiction alike, as is Goodness with respect to virtue and vice, and Beauty with respect to lovely and unlovely.[34]

Further:

> The question, "Is there a thing in itself?" is meaningless: we can only ask, "Is there a form corresponding to the matter (dimension or number)?" The traditional answer assumes the existence of such a form or idea of the thing, as its eternal reason; this is a "reality," but observe that we are now no longer dealing with a self-subsistent thing "in itself," but with the thing "in intellect" and consubstantial with this intellect. It is in this sense that the metaphysician is a "realist": popular and scientific "realism" (=philosophical "nominalism") coincides with "aestheticism" and "sentimentality."[35]

It is most regrettable that this Reality (Truth, Goodness, or Beauty) is usually called value by modern philosophers and men of letters. Because the term "value" is infected with emotive, subjective, and relativistic connotations, it is a gross malapropism to use it with reference to traditional "ideas." This rather extended discussion was needed to demolish once and for all the "myth of Is and Ought," and also the sharp distinction between the descriptive and the

[34] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 2: Selected Papers—Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 294 n. 53.
[35] Ibid., 294 n. 54.

prescriptive which even great logicians like von Wright are not able to discard. It must be remembered that "[a]ll opposition only exists as such at a certain level, for there can be no such thing as an irreducible opposition; at a higher level it is always resolved into a complementarism, in which its two terms are found to be reconciled and harmonized, until they return at last into the unity of the common principle from which they both proceed. . . . what matters therefore is to know how to put each aspect into its proper hierarchical place, and not to try to carry it over into a domain in which it would no longer have any valid significance."[36] The modern mind is irrevocably committed to positivism—whether scientific, logical, or even phenomenological and hermeneutical—with all its implications for social sciences, and it is dead set against a truly metaphysical stance which sees things *sub specie aeternitatis* and has a clear perception of the primordial Unity of all Being.

It may be pointed out that it is only the modern man imbued with the spirit of scientism and positivism and attracted by the "enlightenment project" of the eighteenth century *philosophes* who understands facts and values as dichotomous concepts having disparate ontological character and epistemological status and accords a privileged position to facts as indubitably certain and absolutely fundamental. What René Guénon calls the "superstition of value" arises out of

[36] René Guénon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. Lord Northbourne (London: Luzac, 1953), 242-3.

the modern fact-value dichotomy syndrome, and once we realize that the idea of fact itself is altogether imprecise, obscure, and fictitious, as we have shown, the very *raison d'être* of value to which fact is contrasted, disappears for good. The scientific man makes a fetish of "facts," as the axiologist hypostasizes value. The pre-modern, traditional and archaic man saw things in a different way. For the archaic man "neither the objects of external world nor human acts, properly speaking, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another, in a reality that transcends them. Among countless stones, one stone becomes sacred—and hence instantly becomes saturated with being—because it constitutes a hierophany, or possesses mana, or again because it commemorates a mythical act, and so on." As for human acts, "[t]heir meaning, their value, are not connected with their crude physical datum but with their property of reproducing a primordial act, of repeating a mythical example." [37]

[37] Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 3-4. "In the particulars of his conscious behavior, the 'primitive,' the archaic man, acknowledges no act which has not been previously posited and lived by someone else, some other being who was not a man. What he does has been done before. His life is the ceaseless repetition of gestures initiated by others"; ibid., 5.

IV

Besides value-noncognitivists, value-nominalists and relativisits, there are many thinkers who are called value-realists or value-essentialists. According to them values are objective; they are cognitively valid (value-cognitivism) and can be grasped intuitively. But it must be noted that the intuitionists like G. E. Moore and W. D. Ross do not adopt a metaphysical, transcedental perspective. Moore devotes a full chapter in his *Principia Ethica* to distinguish his position from the standpoint of a metaphysical theory. And Ross talks of "*prima facie* duties." The Austrian school of value theory represented by Brentano, Meinong, and Ehrenfels starting from empirical psychology, adopts the phenomenological-intentionalist framework of analysis. Emotion, not intellection, is its watchword. Nicolai Hartmann who tries to go beyond the Austrian school, is also not a traditional thinker. His

nonreligious, atheistic proclivities are clearly noticeable and are quite in keeping with his empirically oriented ontology. But all the same he is a value-realist and believes that "[k]nowledge of value is genuine knowledge of Being."[38] For Hartmann, values have a sort of "gnoseological" aura about them, and they "subsist independently of the consciousness of them."[39] He also contends that many great European philosophers—among whom he includes preeminently Plato besides Aristotle, Stoics, the masters of scholasticism, and Kant—"with a correct feeling for the puzzling categorial superiority of values to principles of Being, have given precedence in their systems to values."[40] W. M. Urban, following Hartmann, says that "[f]rom the principle of the categorial supremacy of the good follows the principle that 'all ultimate reasons must be in terms of aims at value,' and that in any notion of intelligible causation efficient and final causation must ultimately be identical—two aspects of the same thing seen from different angles."[41]

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[38] Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethics*, trans. Stanton Coit (London: Geore Allen & Unwin, 1950), vol. 1, 219.
[39] Ibid., 218.
[40] Ibid., 241.
[41] Wilbur Marshall Urban, *Language and Reality: The Philosophy of Language and the Principles of Symbolism* (London: Goerge Allen & Unwin, 1939), 693-4.

Both Hartmann and Urban assume that value theory is an essential element of *philosophia perennis.* But, as we have already pointed out, this is a gross misunderstanding both of traditional metaphysics and the nature of values as enunciated by modern philosophers. For one thing, it is not at all clear what is meant by asserting the categorial sumpremacy of Value over Being. Does it mean that value as a category can exist without *being* a value? For another, this thesis of supremacy of Value over Being is contradicted by the second thesis about the inseparability of the two. If value and reality are inseparable, as Hartmann and Urban hold, how can the one be called superior to the other? And it is also a complete misunderstanding of Plato's metaphysics to say that in it the Good takes precedence over the True. The Good in Plato's theory is not a moral but a metaphysical category which embraces Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. It is also another name for God. As Nettleship puts it, it is the keystone of knowledge and the polestar of conduct. While invoking the name of Plato, Hartmann adopts a completely un-Platonic position when he says: "The Platonic notion of 'beholding' well fits that which material ethics designates as the 'sensing of value,' that which is embodied in acts of preference, of approval, of

conviction. Man's sensing of values is the annunciation of their Being in the discerning person, and indeed in their peculiar idealistic kind of existence. The apriority of the knowledge of them is no intellectual or reflective apriority, but is emotional, intuitive."[42] Even a first year student of Plato would reject this as a downright nonsense. The Good as Plato understands it, far from being an act of thought or an object of approbation or disapprobation, is the primordial source of both Knowledge and Being. It is the sun (the Divine Light) which in the sensible world gives the seer the capacity to see and imparts visibility to the object seen; similarly, in the intelligible world, it makes the thinking mind intelligent and the object of thought intelligible. The Good as the Idea of all ideas is the transcendent origin and the Supreme Principle or the "archetype" of all things, sensible and intelligible. It is God Himself, absolutely True, Good, and Beautiful.

It is of utmost importance to guard against the misunderstanding created by Hartmann and his followers that Plato's "ideas" are the equivalent of what is called "values." The latter in almost all formulations are contradistinguished from facts and even from Reality as traditionally conceived.

[42] Hartmann, *Ethis*, 185.

According to J. N. Findlay, himself a noted value theorist who attempts to combine a modified Kantian transcendentalism with Husserlian phenomenology and Rylean "logical geography" and ultimately ends in decisionism,[43] "Hartmann does not believe in a Platonic influence of the Good on the arrangement of things in nature, nor in any form of unconscious Aristotelian teleology. He puts before us the very Germanic picture of Man as having a unique 'demiurgic' vocation, as being *the one channel* through which what is good can become part and parcel of what actually exists. And not only is this the one channel for such influence, it is also a channel that may or may not be used, according as a man freely decides to realise or not to realise such values as he feels."[44] Findlay also adds in parentheses that "Hartmann's views on freedom are, however, a sad nest of obscure contradictions."[45]

In any discussion of values it must be clearly noted that though today the term has become honorific and commonplace in moral and political discourse, it is in fact a modern invention having no analogue in traditional

[43] J. N. Findlay, *Values and Intentions: A Study in Value-Theory and Philosophy of Mind* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), 25. "[I]t is a decision and not insight, that is required"; J. N. Findlay, *Axiological Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 90.
[44] Ibid., 72.
[45] Ibid., 72.

thought. It is certainly not to be confused with the idea of Goodness or Virtue or Justice and Righteousness. Its genesis can be traced to the nineteenth century European philosophy which witnessed the decline of *philosophia perennis* and the ascendency of scientific rationalism and mechanistic materialism and which at the same time acutely felt the need for the recovery of faith in man and human institutions by way of emphasis on values of life and emotions of heart to counterbalance the exclusive faith in the stubborn and irrefragable facts of the material world and value-neutral science of cold and calculating reason. "Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century," Arnold Brecht rightly observes, " 'value' was rarely used abstractly in the general sense that has become characteristic of the twentieth, so as to refer to anything that men consider valuable for whatever reasons, including ideal goods, such as beauty, justice, liberty, equality, and especially ethical aims and attitudes. While the adjective 'valuable' was readily applied to all these, the noun 'goods' rather than 'values' was used for noneconomic objects."[46] Brecht thinks that Georg Simmel seems to have been the first social scientist to use (controversial) "values" for moral and aesthetic ideals.

[46] Brecht, *Political Theory*, 542. Brecht traces the broader use of the term "value" in philosophy and social sciences to the German philosopher Hermann Lotze (1817-81) who looked for the ground of that which is to that which ought to be (*sein soll*). This is the position of Nicolai Hartmann also as we have shown above.

V

Viewed in a historical perspective, value theory as such originated most probably in Economics from where it spread to other areas of social science and moral theory. This becomes clear in reference to the writings of the Austrian school of value philosophy represented by Alexius Meinong and Christian von Ehrenfels who were deeply influenced by the Marginal Utility school of economics led by Carl Menger and F. von Weiser and the psychology or "psychognosy" of Franz Brentano, the author of *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (1889) which was profusely praised by G. E. Moore as one of the most fundamental works on Ethics. As H. O. Eaton observes:

> The new school of value theory always insisted upon looking at values primarily from the viewpoint of the functioning of the valuational process, and it is this which marks their theories as fundamentally different from that of their predecessors. Quesnay,

> Adam Smith, and Karl Marx had no special psychological operation which they held to be necessary in determining value; the sensory apparatus and reason were quite sufficient. But the Austrians realized that valuation involved a unique process, over and above the operation of senses and reason. They pointed out that one of the unique characteristics of the process was that it depended in some way or other upon the quantity of the objects of value present in the given situation. But the quantitative law of diminishing utility is based upon the still more fundamental proposition that values, if studied at all, were to be studied solely as the product of the unique psychological process of valuation.[47]

The impact of the marginal utility theory is most evident in Ehrenfels who insists that ". . . with the step-wise increase of 'supply' (analogous to the economic field) there supervenes not an *equivalent*, but rather a steadily *diminishing* increase of the total utility, so that the concept of *marginal utility* . . . seems in principle to be applicable."[48]

Thus values change like the utility of commodities according to changes in the context and circumstances, and overproduction and undersupply are the factors which determine the scope and scale of their desirability and their "upward" and "downward" movement. They play, according to Ehrenfels, a vital role in evolutionary process. Thus conceived, values become commensurable,

[47] Howard O. Eaton, *The Austrian Philosophy of Values* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1930), 19-20.
[48] Quoted in Ibid., 312.

computable, comparable, exchangeable, even dispensable commodities. And the idea of an absolute value, *summum bonum*, is totally discarded. Meinong makes use of the marginal analysis in his analysis of value, though his general orientation is towards a more objective, phenomenological perspective. However, like other value theorists his notion of valuation is also based on emotion, not cognition. He talks of right kind of emotions, as Brentano spoke of right kind of love, as the basis of values. But a phenomenology of values which seeks to transcend subjectivity of experience by "intentionality" or "directedness" to nonpsychical "objects" cannot by itself guarantee objectivity, universality, and rightness of values. Meinong's theory seems to be a curious and incongruous combination of emotionalism and rationalism.

The Austrian school provided technical sophistication and economic, psychological, and phenomenological foundation to value theory. But the theory received major impetus from a broader philosophic perspective and overall transformation of European civilization during the nineteenth century in the wake of the decline of Tradition and the rise of Romanticism and the philosophies of will and power

under Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as also the philosophies of life like the *Lebensphilosophie* of Wilhelm Dilthey. The result of the new philosophic orientation of thought was the emergence of cultural and human sciences, *Geisteswissenschaften*, in contrast to and parallel with natural sciences, *Naturwissenschaften*, most evidently under the aegis of neo-Kantians of the South-West German (or Baden) school, notably Windelband and Rickert. Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817-1881), an influential German philosopher of his time and the writer of a book on metaphysics, in a way heralded the end of metaphysics by proclaiming the supremacy of ethics over metaphysics and neatly separating knowledge and value, and by relating value to feeling by which, he thought, direct awareness of good and evil, beauty and ugliness is attained. However, the real harbinger of a full-blown modernity, and the thinker who dealt a knockout blow to traditional metaphysical thought, was Nietzsche, that *enfant terrible* of modern philosophy, who not only announced the death of God but also proclaimed the birth of the Superman, who was "beyond Good and Evil." He drew the full logical consequences of the philosophy of value in introducing his notion of "trans-valuation of all values."If values are the product of valuation—and

this was their essential characteristics according to all forms of value theories, phenomenological-existential,economic-psychological,pragmatic instrumental, or emotional-intuitive—they themselves can be re-valued and de-valued. All values, in other words, are subject to transvaluation, inversion, and subversion which, of course, ultimately leads to moral nihilism or ethical anarchism. Few modern thinkers or writers on values have realized the full implication of Nietzsche's far-reaching insight and the radical novelty and revolutionary potentiality of value theory more clearly than Hannah Arendt whose incisive comments and profound observations deserve to be quoted at length:

> Nietzsche's devaluation of values, like Marx's labor theory of value, arises from the incompatibility between the traditional "ideas," which as transcendent units, had been used to recognize and measure human thoughts and actions, and modern society, which had dissolved all such standards into relationships between its members, establishing them as functional "values." Values are social commodities that have no significance of their own but, like other commodities, exist only in the ever-changing relativity of social linkages and commerce. Through this relativization both the things which man produces for his use and the standards according to which he lives undergo a decisive change: they become entities of exchange, and the bearer of their "value" is society and not man, who produces and uses and judges. The "good" loses its character as an idea, the standard by which the

good and the bad can be measured and recognized; it has become a value which can be exchanged with other values, such as those of expediency or of power. The holder of values can refuse this exchange and become an "idealist," who prices the value of "good" higher than the value of expediency; but this does not make the "value" of good any less relative.[49]

Arendt further adds:

The term "value" owes its origin to the sociological trend which even before Marx was quite manifest in the relatively new science of classical economy. . . . The birth of the social sciences can be located at the moment when all things, "ideas" as well as material objects, were equated with values, so that everything derived its existence from and was related to society, the *bonum* and *malum* no less than tangible objects. . . .

Nietzsche seems to have been unaware of the origin as well as of the modernity of the term "value" when he accepted it as a key notion in his assault on tradition. But when he began to devaluate the current values of society, the implications of the whole enterprise quickly became manifest. Ideas in the sense of absolute units had become identified with social values to such an extent that they simply ceased to exist once their value-character, their social status, was challenged.[50]

From this highly perceptive analysis Arendt draws the inescapable logical conclusion which came to be the fundamental postulate of modern sciences, both natural and human, namely, the concept of *wertfreie Wissenschaft*, which could no longer find

[49] Hannah Arendt, "Tradition and the Modern Age," in *Between Past and Future* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), 32–3.
[50] Ibid., 33–4.

either truth or value in anything. "And when Nietzsche proclaimed that he had discovered 'new and higher values,' he was the first to fall prey to delusions which he himself had helped to destroy, accepting the old traditional notion of measuring with transcendent units in its newest and most hideous form, thereby again carrying the relativity and exchangeability of values into the very matters whose absolute dignity he had wanted to assert—power and life and man's love of his earthly existence."[51]

This unusually acute and profound analysis brings out all the perplexities, antinomies, and self-contradictions inherent in modern culture. It underscores the fundamental contradiction between the Platonic Idea of the Good, the immutable, eternal source of knowledge and being, and the contingent, relative, and subjective values on which man has fallen back for succor in the event of the loss of tradition. As Friedrich A. Lange saw it, "[m]an needs to supplement reality (about which materialism is the best truth we know) with an ideal world of his own creation," and this is the world of value "against which neither logic, nor touch of hand nor sight of eye can prevail."[52] But this world which was rooted neither

[51] Ibid., 34–5.

[52] Frederick Albert Lange, *History of Materialism and Criticism of its Present Importance*, trans. Ernest Chester Thomas (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), vol. 3, 342, 347; quoted by Lewis White Beck in "Neo-Kantianism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), vol. 5, 469.

in reason nor in nature, nor in history, was too fragile and evanescent to provide an enduring solution to the existential predicament of man. The concept of value had relativized everything including the very standard by which things were judged and this robbed man of his own intrinsic worth and dignity. The commodification of values and the trade-off between them that inevitably followed their absolute relativization made it easy, without any moral compunction or logical incoherence, to exchange the worth of man for other values like power, prestige, wealth, and security. Thomas Hobbes, the father of modern philosophy in more than one way, with his unerring insight had seen the implication of value theory much before Nietzsche, Heidegger, or Hannah Arendt:

> The *value,* or WORTH of a man, is as of all other things, his price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependant on the need and judgment of another. . . . And as in other things, so in men, not the seller, but the buyer determines the price. For let a man, as most men do, rate themselves at the highest value they can; yet their true value is no more than it is esteemed by others.[53]

The Romanticists, the neo-Kantians, and the humanists of the nineteenth and the early twentieth

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[53] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), 57 (part 1, chap. 10).

centuries were the votaries of humanistic culture, of *Geisteswissenschaften* as contradistinguished from *Naturwissenschaften.* Windelband, Rickert, and Dilthey all wanted to rescue human spirit and creativity, art and culture, history and life-world from the deadening, mechanizing, and dehumanizing effect of scientific reason and materialist philosophy. They had of course more or less acquiesced in the bifurcation of Reality into the contrasted and ontologically separated realms of man and nature—nature being governed by causal necessity, devoid of meaning and purpose, of divine entelechy, and man endowed with freedom, self-determination and creativity, a bearer of culture and a creator of human values and moral norms. For Georg Simmel, "[a]ll values are merely emotional consequences of certain ideas."[54] Heinrich Rickert was quite emphatic in his assertion of truth as value. He called a man "ethical, in the widest sense of the word, if, after recognizing a value as valid [ought] *by free decision*, he does what he ought to do."[55] But Rickert was quite clear about the nondemonstrability of ethical, aesthetic, and cultural values by scientific proof. No Ought can be

[54] *Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*, vol. 1, 251; quoted in Brecht, *Political Theory*, 216.
[55] *System der Philosophie*, 327; quoted in Brecht, *Political Theory*, 218.

logically derived from Is, he firmly believed, though he insisted that once we acknowledge the facts of our perceptions it is obligatory on us to recognize them as the "truth of simple statements of facts."[56] The concept of the immutable and transcendent Eternal Law, *Lex Aeterna*, or *Jus Naturale* encompassing the whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth and governing both the human and the physical worlds, was discarded in favor of two separate laws, physical and human, existing side by side and confronting each other in a state of perpetual and irreconcilable opposition. Man and nature both lost their symbolic and sacred character and became the worldly objects of use and control. Poets like Goethe, Wordsworth, and Hölderlin did indeed see nature pulsating with life and endowed with divine beauty. But in general the new humanism and the doctrine of autonomy of morals associated with it, tried to secure the dignity of man and sought to sanctify his person at the expense of his divinity and transcendent origin. But, as we know, it is the fundamental axiom of traditional thought that "cut off from the Divine, the human collapses." "Only the science of the Absolute gives meaning and discipline to the science of the relative." "The substance of human knowledge is Knowledge

[56] Brecht, *Political Theory*, 219.

of the divine Substance."[57] These are the unmistakable *Echoes of Perennial Wisdom* (Frithjof Schuon, 1992). Those moral philosophers and political theorists who while not explicitly rejecting Tradition espouse the cause of human rights and human values with axiomatic self-assurance and most benevolent intentions, often tend to forget that these are untraditional, moralistic and modernistic, secular notions having no basis in traditional metaphysics and religion. They are born on the explicit or implicit denial of the Primordial Tradition. "Even the goodness of the modern world is unprincipled; its 'altruisn' is no longer founded on a knowledge of the Self of all beings and therefore in the love of Self, but only on selfish inclination. And what of these who are not inclined to be unselfish; is there any intellectual standard by which they can be blamed"?[58]

[57] Frithjof Schuon, *Echoes of Perennial Wisdom* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1992), 47.
[58] A.K. Coomaraswamy. 'Am I My Brother's Keeper?' in the Bugbear of Literacy (London, Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1949) 11-12

VI

Tradition speaks of *Dharma, Righteousness, Justice, Rta,* and *Tao.* The traditional view presupposes the integral unity of knowledge and being, of thought and action, and has an unflinching faith in an all embracing metacosmic reality which is at once Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Natural law and human law are both derived from the one supreme Eternal Law in which Necessity and Right are united. According to an apophthegm, ascribed to Pythagoras, "*Themis* in the realm of *Zeus*, and *Dike* in the world below, hold the same place and rank as *Nomos* in the cities of men; so that one who does not justly perform his appointed duty, may appear as the violator of the whole order of the universe."[59] Morality is not a matter either of free will, of individual self-expression, or of human emotions and sentiments; the word "self"

[59] Francis Macdonald Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study of the Origins of Western Speculation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 54.

has no meaning unless we know whether we are speaking of "self" or of the "Self." It is also not Kant's categorical imperative of self-imposed duties. It consists in acting in conformity with the essential nature of beings which is realized in the supreme unity, cosmic harmony, reciprocity and hierarchy manifested in the structure of the world, also called the Great Chain of Being. "And man is so made that his intelligence has no effective value unless it be combined with a virtuous character. Besides, no virtuous man is altogether deprived of intelligence; while the intellectual capacity of an intelligent man has no value except through truth. Intelligence and virtue are in conformity with their reason for being only through their supernatural contents or archetypes; in a word, man is not fully human unless he transcends himself, hence, in the first place, unless he masters himself."[60]

"In other words: from the standpoint of intelligence, the good and the beautiful are quite clearly truths, or let us say realities; from the standpoint of the will, the true and beauty are goods; and from the standpoint of love, the truth and the good have their beauty, which is much more than a manner of speaking."[61] There is no question of autonomy of

[60] Frithjof Schuon, *To Have a Center* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1990), 40.
[61] Frithjof Schuon, *The Play of Masks* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1992), 9-10.

morals here, nor is there any radical separation between Reason and Will. There is no Axiology apart from Metaphysics and no values based on free choice or emotional preferences. The classical position has been summed up with remarkable precision and comprehensiveness by A. K. Coomaraswamy:

> Ethics, whether as prudence or as art, is nothing but the scientific application of doctrinal norms to contingent problems; right doing or making are matters not of the will, but of conscience, or awareness, a choice being only possible as between obedience or rebellion. Actions, in other words, are in order or inordinate in precisely the same way that iconography may be correct or incorrect, formal or informal. Error is failure to hit the mark, and is to be expected in all who act instinctively, to please themselves. Skill (*kauœalyâ* =sojia), is virtue, whether in doing or in making: a matter needing emphasis only because it has now been generally overlooked that there can be artistic as well as moral sin. "Yoga is skill in works".[62]

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[62] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1943), 26. The point that is emphasized here is that moral conduct has no meaning except in relation to the Doctrine. Buddha's ten "commandments" or rules of virtuous conduct, though indispensable as means (*upāya*), are not man's last end. They do not have an absolute value. Morality is only a way (*upāya*) to an end which is *Nirvāṇa* or emancipation. "We must not, for example, suppose that because the means are partly ethical, *Nirvāṇa* is therefore an ethical state. So far from this, un-self-ishness, from the Indian point of view is an amoral state, in which no question of 'altruism' can present itself, liberation being as much from the notion of 'others' as it is from the notion of 'self'; and not in any sense a psychological state, but a liberation from all that is implied by the 'psyche' in the word 'psychology' "; ibid., 66. One can easily see how far removed are the modern theories of morality and value from traditional thought.

Thought are *Dharma* and *Karma*, not values and goods. Buddha's Eightfold Paths—right faith, right resolve, right speech, and so on—are ways of wisdom, not values. And the four *puruṣārthas—dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*—are also not values in the modern sense, but principial norms immanent in the cosmos, and are the definitive features of man's very being. *Dharma* is the support or the foundation of the cosmic order. As the etymology of the word suggests, it holds things together. As René Guénon puts it, it simply denotes "manner of being"; "it then, at one level or another, signifies conformity with the essential nature of beings, which is realized in the ordered hierarchy where all beings have their place, and it is also, in consequence, the fundamental equilibrium or integral harmony resulting from this hierarchical disposition, which is moreover precisely what the idea of 'justice' amounts to when stripped of its specifically moral character."[63] *Sva-dharma*, or what one is required to do, is to act in accordance with one's own nature. This is what Plato's justice (*dikaiosynē*) exactly means.

By now it must be clear that all this has hardly anything to do with mere human values, contrary to what many people including philosophers like

[63] René Guénon, *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, trans. Marco Pallis (London: Luzac, 1945), 211.

Hartmann and Urban confidently believe. As a matter of fact, humanism is an altogether modern doctrine precisely because it is premised on the denial of the suprahuman. "The humanistic perspective," says Frithjof Schuon, "not only proposes the cult of man, but by that very fact also aims at perfecting man according to an ideal that does not transcend the human plane. Now this moral idealism is fruitless because it depends entirely on a human ideology; such an ideal wants man to be ever productive and dynamic, hence the cult of genius, precisely. The moral ideal of humanism is inefficacious because it is subject to the tastes of the moment, or to fashion, if one wishes; for positive qualities are fully human only in connection with the will to surpass oneself, hence only in relation to what transcends us."[64]

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, another prominent traditional thinker, elucidates the notion of humanism in the following words in his Gifford Lectures:

> The kind of humanism associated with the Promethean revolt of the Renaissance has led in only a few centuries to the veritably infrahuman which threatens not only the human quality of life but the very existence of man on earth. The reason for such a phenomenon, which seems so unexpected from the perspective of Promethean man, is quite obvious from the traditional point of

[64] Schuon, *To have a Center*, 10-11.

view. It lies in the fact that to speak of the human is to speak, at the same time, of the Divine. Although scholars occasionally discuss what they call Chinese or Islamic humanism, there has in fact never been a humanism in any traditional civilization similar to the one associated with the European Renaissance and what followed upon its wake. Traditional civilizations have spoken of man and of course created cultures and disciplines called the humanities of the highest order but the man they have spoken of has never ceased to be that pontifical man who stands on the axis joining Heaven and earth and who bears the imprint of the Divine upon his very being."[65]

The human is not the ultimate metaphysical category. "The metaphysical concept of Perfection," says Coomaraswamy, "indeed, envisages a state of being that is, not *in*human . . . nor 'heartless' . . . but assuredly *non*-human."[66] The aim is to be dead and buried in the Godhead.

It hardly needs to be emphasized that the above exposition is not meant to denigrate man and human values. It is only to put them in proper metaphysical perspective.

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[65] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), 181.

[66] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "On the Pertinence of Philosophy" in *What is Civilisation*? (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 26-7. "If this appears to be a denial of ultimate significance to human love, the position has been altogether misunderstood. For all metaphysical formulations, assuming that an infallible analogy relates every plane of being to every other, have seen in human love an image of divine felicity (*purnānaṇda*), imagined not as a contradiction of but as transformation (*parāvṛtti*) of sensual experience"; ibid., 27.

VII

The philosophies of value are in general the by-product of the nineteenth century European "culture"; and the rise of "culture," which is primarily a phenomenological and functional rather than metaphysical concept, as averred by one of its main exponents, Ernst Cassirer,[67] was marked by the decline amd obsolescence of traditional vision of man. As a matter of fact the concept "culture" was introduced as a substitute for Tradition and metaphysics. Humanism, with which the concept "culture" was inextricably bound, was, in fact, only an aspect of modern rationalism, positivism, and scientism, as René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, and other masters of traditional thought have clearly shown. In traditional thought there was no hiatus between Thought and Being, Knowledge and Reality. "To be and to know are one and the same" (Parmenides).[68]

[67] Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1944), 67-8.

[68] *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. von Hermann Diels (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903), fr. 18B5; quoted in Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 2*, 56.

The loss of Tradition and man's forgetfulness of Being led to a radical world-alienation of man whose precarious existence was constricted to the self-enclosed little island of individual sense-experience and the Cogito of the Cartesians, and the world was laid aside as an extraneous reality, unknowable in itself, but accessible to man as a construct of reason for the purpose of manipulation, control, and domination. It became a world of "impoverished reality" without meaning and purpose. Martin Heidegger was one of the great modern thinkers to have clearly recognized the baneful effect of the separation of Being and Knowledge.[69] Earlier Friedrich Nietzsche with his uncanny insight had put his finger on the most vulnerable spot in the heart of modern philosophy in the following words:

> The most universal sign of the modern age: man has lost *dignity* in his own eyes to an incredible extent. For a long time the center and tragic hero of existence in general; then at least intent on proving himself closely related to the decisive and essentially valuable side of existence—like all metaphysicians who wish to cling to the *dignity of man*, with their faith that moral values are cardinal values. *Those who have abondoned God cling that much more firmly to the faith in morality.*[70]

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[69] See J. L. Mehta, *The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger (Varanasi:* Banaras Hindu University Press, 1967), 65.
[70] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann and Reginald John Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 16 (1: 18); emphasis added.

And the morality of the modern man, that is, the post Renaissance enlightened man, generally assumes two forms: the hedonistic-utilitarian, liberal morality which takes pleasure-pain or satisfaction of desires and preferences as the basic motive and value of life, and the Kantian rational morality which postulates a rational free will which is able to disengage itself both from the contingency and evanescence of human desires and aversions and the inexorable causal necessity of the physical world, and which follows a set of self-imposed categorical imperatives of duty whose maxims, with their essential criterion of universalizability, become the duty of all individuals who are endowed with such a will. The latter is the deontological view of ethics as opposed to the teleological or consequentialist theories of the utilitarians. (We may leave out for our present purpose the Marxian view of morality as ideological distortion or false consciousness of social reality reflecting the class struggle, which is a powerful critique, rather than an instance, of the mainstream ethical theories.)

The former kind of morality reduces the ethical to the mere psychological and thus commits what Moore called the "naturalistic fallacy," a point well made whether or not it is a logical fallacy in the strict

sense of the term. It is an egregious mistake common to much of the modern liberal thinking about ethics. In the case of Kantian deontology, formal consistency and universality of moral principles is achieved at the expense of its reality, that is, its relation to man and society which remains almost always asymptotic, if we may use a mathematical analogy. As Hegel was quick to point out in his criticism of Kant, it is too subjective, individualistic, and formalistic—absolutely empty—to provide a sound basis for the concrete world of Social Ethics or *Sittlichkeit*. And at the hands of the most famous of Kant's recent followers in political theory, John Rawls, Kant's sublime self-imposed categorical imperatives of duty, postulates of pure practical reason anchored on the noumenal reality of the self, the immortability of the soul, and the existence of God, degenerate into contractual obligations undertaken by men in a hypothetical "original position" under the "veil of ignorance" in the form of rules and norms of human conduct for procedural fairness and impartiality in the common pursuit of liberty and primary goods which are considered essential for all whatever be a person's ultimate philosophy of life. But this, called "Justice as Fairness," far from being a Kantian deontology rooted in man's transcendental freedom, is in a way a

kind of a disguised version of rule-utilitarianism or consequentialism aiming to maximize our minimum gains (minimax principle) or minimize our maximum losses (maximin) in a well-ordered society. It may also be considered as a form of rational choice theory of the game theoretic model.

Indeed, not much, if anything, of substance in Kant's "Metaphysics of Morals" survives in Rawls's "Kantian Constructivism." Kant bases his theory of morality on the noumenal reality of transcendental freedom, on "rational faith" (in the immortality of the soul and the existence of God) to which he refers in his famous remark that he "found it necessary to destroy knowledge in order to make room for faith." For Kant moral laws are categorical and universal, and there is an objective moral fact, a "fact of reason." For Rawls, on the other hand, "[a]part from the procedure of constructing the principles of justice, there are no moral facts. Whether certain facts are to be recognized as reasons of right and justice, or how much they are to count, can be ascertained only from within the constructive procedure, that is, from the undertakings of rational agents of construction when suitably represented as free and equal moral persons."[71]

[71] John Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," in *Collected Papers*, ed. Samuel Freeman (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 307.

Moreover, John Rawls wrenches out the kind of rules he wants by first feeding them into the mind of the bargaining individuals in the "original position" and then making them think the way he has already charted out for them. Thus he puts the cart before the horse, and begs the question at issue. His bargainers are the typical rational citizens of the present-day Western society interested in the values of modern liberal, industrial civilization, as he himself acknowledges in his later writings. His theory of justice as fairness is not applicable to the traditional and archaic societies that are still existent in some parts of the world. It is narrowly local and narrowly dated, and stands in sharp contrast to the traditional theories which are universal and eternal, based on the analogical correspondence between the Macrocosm and the microcosm—as Above, so below.

As to reason in general, cut off from its suprahuman source and freed from its natural bond of affinity to the ethics of goodness, and also enthused by the Promethean spirit and armed with Vico's methodology of knowing by making (*verum = factum*), it becomes wilfully aggressive and finally a conquistador. Knowledge becomes a form of power, reason the "reckoning of consequences," and the

rational man embarks upon his unremitting project of the conquest of nature. But though man gains enormous power by the increase of knowledge, he loses his self-identiy, his person, and his soul. The acquisition of power becomes "the Magician's bargain" as pointed out by C. S. Lewis: Give up your soul and get power in return. "But once our souls, that is ourselves, have been given up, the power thus conferred will not belong to us. We shall in fact be the slaves and puppets of that to which we have given our souls," that is, the conditioners and manipulators who have taken charge of our well-being.[72] This human predicament has been aptly described as the Abolition of Man by Lewis. Coming to the same conclusion by a different route and from a different philosophical perspective, Foucault potrayed this paradoxical situation in his famous imagery of the figure of man soon to "be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."[73]

In the annunciation of values man perhaps found out a way of escape from this self-created

[72] Clive Staples Lewis, *The Abolition of Man, or, Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), 50.
[73] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 387.

predicament. Values came in as some sort of compensation, as it were, for the loss of man's authentic existence and divine provenance. Threatend by the progressive mechanization, quantification, and dehumanization of life by science and technology, man had to assert his vibrant energy and creative genius in the form of having certain values and rights imputed to him as a moral and legal person which were in no way dependent on, or derived from, either his own nature or the external world of matter and motion. Arts and literature, music and painting as well as political systems and ideologies were all, it was thought, the expression and exuberant efflorescence of this aspect of man. Thus the idea of "autonomy of morals" and of human and cultural science as against natural sciences came into vogue. More recently, a popular interpretation of quantum physics provided further credibility to this way of thinking by affirming "freedom of will" and the principle of indetermination in contrast to causal necessitation and physical determinism of the Newtonian mechanics. Having lost his original nature as a metaphysical being, as a self-conscious and self-reflecting being, man had to be invested with certain values to cherish and live by and given certain inalienable rights to make his life fruitful and dynamic.

But these values and rights (right to liberty, equality, and property, or conditions of adequate living, and so on, were conceived as primary goods or basic values) were not supposed to be integral to man *qua* man; they were essentially ascriptive, appurtenant to his moral and legal personality. They were, as it were, projected on man, or annexed to his person *ab extra*, to make him human. Values and rights became the emblems of man's self-identity, the insignia of his special status in the world. But there was no hierarchy of values, no integral whole in which different values could cohere consistently.

In one version of the theory, we find that each value, unless it is a means to another more important value, is unique, ultimate, and incommensurable. This is the doctrine of value-pluralism and here we have no logical way to decide the validity of the choice of ultimate values. Pushed to its logical conclusion, value-pluralism is nothing but an honorific epithet for value-neutrality or value-negativism. For if all ultimate values are equally good, there is no point in choosing from amongst them. All values are of nominal validity. In another version, values are qualitatively indistinguishable, commensurable, and interchangeable; pushpin is as good as poetry so long

as both yield the same amount of pleasure, according to Bentham. The extrapolation of values from the limited field of economics to the general pattern of life was facilitated and given a semblance of plausibility by the life of industry which was a prominent feature of what René Guénon calls the "Reign of Quantity."

> The qualitative degeneration of all things is closely linked to that of money, as is shown by the fact that nowadays the "worth" of an object is ordinarily "estimated" only in terms of its price, considered simply as a "figure", a "sum" or a numerical quantity of money; in fact, with most of our contemporaries, every judgment brought to bear on an object is nearly always based exclusively on what it costs. The word "estimate" has been emphasized because it has in itself a double meaning, qualitative and quantitative; to-day the first meaning has been lost to sight, or, what amounts to the same thing, means have been found to equate it to the second, and thus it comes about that not only is the "worth" of an object "estimated" according to its price, but the "worth" of a man is "estimated" according to his wealth. *The same thing has naturally happened to the word "value", and it may be noticed in passing that on this is based a curious abuse of the word by certain recent philosophers, who have even gone so far as to invent as a description of their theories the expression "philosophy of values"; underlying their thoughts is the idea that everything, to whatever order it may belong, is capable of being conceived quantitatively and expressed numerically; and "moralism", which is their other predominant preoccupation, thus comes to be closely associated with the quantitative point of view.*[74]

[74] Guénon, *The Reign of Quantity,* 137-8 (emphasis added)

The modern philosophies of value, instead of providing a viable alternative to the loss of traditional wisdom and the traditional way of life, served only to camouflage and confuse the real issue: Is it possible to restore humanity and dignity to man without (re-integrating) him to his principial base, the Eternal Truth of which he is only a reflection in the mirror of time? "Things apparent are the vision of things unseen."Only the symbolical and mythical understanding of Truth can give us the ultimate meaning of human existence. The phenomenological and moralistic plane to which the value philosophy confines man cannot capture his real nature and desitny. Man cannot be identified with the values he professes or rights he possesses. These values and rights are the contingent and transient expression of his real Self. Power, knowledge, wealth, honor, and self-respect are all meaningless unless man knows Who He Is. The profound question is not the scientific-anthropological question, "what is Man?", for its very syntax *ab initio* distorts the nature of man by objectifying him and thereby dehumanizing him. It is the metaphysical-autological question, "Who Am I?" where "I" does not lose its transcendental subjectivity. When this question is seriously pursued, we are able to attain the knowledge of our Real Self which is beyond our profane and phenomenal existence. We then see that things with which we ordinarily identify ourselves are non-real; they are altogether extraneous to our Being. *Na me so attā* ("That is not my Self").

VIII

Human values and the cognate concepts, human rights and human development, have become the stock-in-trade of contemporary political and legal theory. But a moment's reflection will show that the word "human" has ceased to be meaningful in the present context. It has become almost superfluous, having been in fact superseded by the noun it is supposed to qualify. This becomes abundantly clear from an unabashed, preposterous assertion by Joel Feinberg, a prominent proponent of rights, that "*respect for persons (this is an intriguing idea) may simply be respect for their rights*, so that there cannot be the one without the other; and *what is called 'human dignity' may simply be the recognizable capacity to assert claims*. To rsepect a person then, or to think of him as possessed of human dignity, simply *is* to think of him as a potential maker

of claims."[75] This in effect divests man of his human personality and reduces him to a *persona ficta*, a mere locus of jural and quasi-moral relations, or a focal point of rights and obligations. Instead of rights getting meaning and value from man, it is the man whose dignity and moral status is judged in terms of his putative rights. The order of priorily is turned upside down.

It is surprising that it does not occur to Feinberg that one can well refrain from infringing upon a person's right to life and property and, at the same time, hold him in utter contempt as a moral being. Again, to equate human dignity with "recognizable capacity to assert claims" means that those who cannot be recognized to be able to claim their rights have no dignity and do not deserve respect. This would in effect deprive our forefathers, saints, poets, and artists of dignity and absolve us from respecting them simply on the ground that they can never claim their right to respect. Further, what about our concern for nature, animals, and plants of which the present ecological crisis has made us so conscious? In the din and clamor of claims and counterclaims we are prone

[75] Joel Feinberg, "The Nature and Value of Rights," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1970): 252 (emphases added).

to deprive ourselves of the cardinal virtues of man like sympathy, piety, compassion, reverence, and renunciation and land ourselves in a most unedifying reign of Rights *sans* Righteousness.

Rights properly speaking are, contrary to the prevalent modern view, nothing but an oblique way of indicating the reciprocal duties and obligations of citizens towards one another in the interest of a just and harmonious functioning of society. Their metamorphosis and reification into prior individual claims and the subsumption of human dignity under them betokens the end of man as a self-conscious moral person and spells the doom of his metaphysical nature. In traditional thought rights have no meaning whatsoever apart from *Dharma*, Justice, Righteousness, or Duty. In fact the word itself is seldom, if ever, used there in the modern sense. Right (*réctus*) is literally the cor-réct (*cor-réctus* = make straight) way of doing things; its antonym is might or wrong, not duty. If everybody performs his duties, there is *ipso facto* no need of rights. As a matter of fact, rights cannot exist apart from, or antecedent to, duties. They are, as Howard Warrender succinctly puts it, "merely the shadows cast by (other people's)

duties."[76] Their supervention upon duties is bound to cause endless confusion and conflicts in actual life, as is fully illustrated by the present human conditions, both in the national and the international fields. It has rightly been said that "the traditional doctrine of justice is concerned not with the claimant, but the man owing a claim. It is not concerned with the declaration of human rights, belonging to men as their legitimate claim. Rather, it is the proclamation and establishments of obligations to respects rights"[77]

Some contemporary proponents of human development, following the lead of the economist-philosopher Amartya Sen, have proposed the development of human capabilities to achieve valuable functionings as the aim of public policy in place of the Rawlsian focus on primary goods and Dworkin's emphasis on the equality of resources as values to be realized by the modern state.[78] But to

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[76] Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 19.

[77] Josep Pipper, *Justice* Translated by Lawrence E. Lynch (London: Faber And Faber), 76

[78] A. K. Sen, "Equality of What?" in *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 1, ed. S. M. McMurrin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 195–220; *Resources, Values and Development* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); *Inequality Reexamined* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); "Capability and Well-Being" in *The Quality of Life*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 30–53.

the question, put in the vein of Sen himself, "capability for what?" no clear-cut, definitive answer seems to be forthcoming except that it is capability for excellent functioning. And this is neither here nor there. For want of a clear idea of man's ultimate end, *summum bonum*, or his essential nature, it is not possible to define human excellence in a satisfactory way. Sen's own answer is open-ended, that is, there is no single criterion of what constitutes a valuable human life. It is precisely on this point that he finds himself unable to accept the Aristotelian position which emphasizes *eudaimonia* and *theoria* as the ultimate ends of human life. The capability approach is consistent and combinable with different substantive theories of ethics and morally excellent life. According to it, in the absence of an objective normative concept of human functioning, all that one needs to do is to choose freely from amongst the various alternative combinations of functionings without looking for a unique and metaphysically perfect architectonics of values. Thus one has freedom to live one kind of life or another depending upon one's own personal preferences. This, however, is to surrender the whole case for development which implies a given end, and throw away the baby with the bathwater. As regards choice between different

ends, it may be reiterated that choice without reason is not freedom but submission to passion and caprice. Truly speaking, freedom and choice are incompatible concepts; there is no such thing as freedom of choice. To recapitulate our earlier argument, perfect freedom implies that one can choose anything from amongst the alternatives available to him, and in that case there is really nothing to choose; one can arbitrarily pick up anything that comes one's way. If, on the other hand, a person really chooses, he must choose that which he considers best and hence he is not completely free in his choice. Freedom is "choiceless awareness," says J. Krishnamurti.[79] It is a state of intellectual repose and equipoise which is not torn between conflicting desires or actuated by contradictory considerations. A free man moves spontaneously to his natural destination or *telos* without any constraint or motive. He is free by the necessity of his own nature.

If there is no natural destination or telos of man, the very idea of human flourishing is *ex hypothesi*

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[79] J. Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, with a foreword by Aldous Huxley (London: Victor Gollancz, 1954), 174. "What is important, surely, is to be aware without choice, because choice brings about conflict. The chooser is in confusion, therefore he chooses; if he is not in confusion, there is no choice. Only the person who is confused chooses what he shall do or shall not do. The man who is clear and simple does not choose; what is, is"; ibid., 97–8.

meaningless. It is not that the traditional view does not tolerate multiple life styles and different ethical imperatives. The point is that amidst the multitudinous variety of norms and practices that mankind adopts there must be some agreed, inherent, fundamental, immutable, and eternal principles which constitute the basis of all life. All particular norms derive their meaning from one Supreme Norm. The Logos, the *Lex Aeterna*, the *Tao*, or the *Ṛta* is the Universal principle embracing all things in simultaneous identity with itself. "Insofar as we participate in the memory of that [common and divine] Reason, we speak truth, but whenever we are thinking for ourselves (*ἰδιασωμεν*), we lie" (Sextus Empiricus).[80] Metaphysics believes in the "Integral multiplicity," the "Supreme Identity" of the One and the Many. "If what of the Supreme Identity is manifestable appears to us to be contrasted into variety and individualized, the doctrine of Exemplarism, common to both the Eastern and the Western forms of a common tradition, exhibits the relation of this apparent multiplicity to the unity on which it hangs, and apart from which its being would be a pure nonentity; and

[80] Sextus Empiricus, on Heracleitos, in *Adversus dogmaticos* 1.131–4; quoted in Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 1: Selected Papers—Traditional Art and Symbolism*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 294 n. 21 (brackets by Coomaraswamy).

furthermore, inasmuch as the last end must be the same as the first beginning, the way is pointed out that leads again from multiplicity to unity, from the semblance to reality."[81]

As regards the relationship between man and his capabilities, it is pertinent to point out that man is not simply a sum total of his capabilities. He is an integral whole. Unless we have a noetic consciousness of "who we are," our capacities and powers do not belong to us and the talk of human flourishing makes no sense. It is neither possible nor desirable to identify man with any or all of his powers, if the word "all" makes any sense here in the absence of the possibility of a definite inventory of man's powers. And amidst the multiple variety of his powers and capabilities of creation and destruction, of making and doing, man must be able to distinguish those powers which in an essential way characterize his humanity and distinguish him from other beings. "I can never be equated to the sum of my talents and powers, for this equation leaves out the 'I' that determines the specific and actual uses that are made of the powers and talents, and this 'I' must, *ex hypothesi,* transcend the sum of my talents and powers."[82]

[81] Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 2*, 197.
[82] A. K. Saran, *Traditional Vision of Man* (Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1998), 63-4.

Theorists of "human capability," "access to advantage," equal opportunities to enjoy freedom from disease, poverty, and ignorance as ends of development, confine their attention to the immediate and pressing problems of economic welfare, just distribution of resources and development mostly in the context of the Third World countries. And their concern is understandable and laudable. But unfortunately their preoccupation with urgent practical problems and the required methodological refinement in matters of measurement and evaluation (of income and level of development) in terms of postulated indices, coefficients, coordinates, and a precise algorithm for comparative analysis, though necessary and useful, falls far short of providing a framework for an adequate philosophy of action and a comprehensive, integral view of life. Analytical clarity and methodological accuracy cannot be a substitute for philosophical profundity and speculative wisdon. Capabilities *per se* do not, and cannot, constitute a happy life and excellent functioning; they require proper direction and right perspective which can only be provided by pure intelligence, *nous* or *prajñā*, and never by discursive reason. As a matter of fact, capabilities by themselves have immense potentialities for evil and

destruction and we must be very cautious about their actual use and imponderable consequences that might follow. Recent advances in nuclear physics, biotechnology, and cybernetics provide ample and conclusive proof of this.

> It is beyond doubt that the capacity to act is the most dangerous of all human abilities and possibilities, and it is also beyond doubt that the self-created risks mankind faces today have never been faced before. Considerations like these are not at all meant to offer solutions or to give advice. At best, they might encourage sustained and closer reflection on the nature and the intrinsic potentialities of action, which never before has revealed its greatness and its dangers so openly.[83]

In the ultimate analysis the highest kind of activity of man is prayer, or contemplation of God's Infinite Wisdom and His Supreme Majesty. In the absence of this all power comes down to a form of inordinate pride, *hubris* that is bound to meet its *nemesis* sooner or later.

Human action which is unavoidably uncertain and unpredictable—there being no commensurability between the intention and consequences of an action—binds the actor in an inexorable causal chain and makes him a victim and sufferer of his own action. The predicament and problematics of action cannot

[83] Hannah Arendt, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," in *Between Past and Future*, 63.

be resolved at its (action's) own level because the chain of action is interminable and indeterminable. We must pass from action to contemplation and see action in inaction (or non-action) and inaction in action in the sprit of the *Bhagavad Gîtā*. Contemplation raises us from the human to the Divine plane and enables us to have the intellectual intuition of the Eternal Truth and attain the state of the Perfect Bliss and Deliverance (*mokṣa*) from the bondage of action.

Martha Nussbaum, another important writer on developmental ethics, attempts to go beyond Sen and adopt the Aristotelian essentialist approach to arrive at the concept of "non-relative virtue,"[84] and a more objective and morally satisfying life. But all the same she shuns metaphysical realism which presupposes an objective reality, the independent furniture of the universe apart from the self-understanding and self-interpretation of men. She starts from a list of "basic human functional capabilities" drawn from an empirical study of actual practices prevalent in various societies across the globe. From this she arrives at a general consensus about the basic traits that may be said to be distinctive features of any group or

[84] Martha C. Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defence of Aristotelian Essentialism," *Political Theory* 20, no. 2 (May 1992): 202-46; "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach" in *The Quality of Life*, 242–69.

community and their practices (*praxis*) worthy of being characterized as human. But the fact is that this approach is neither Aristotelian nor essentialist of any (other) kind, for Aristotle's philosophical position is nothing other than philosophical realism, and from the methodological point of view the essential nature of a practice or idea cannot be known by generalization from particular instances and observed practices in their multiple variety. Without a prefiguration of the idea of virtue one can never recognize a virtuous act. "The movement of primitive logic is not abstractive from an observed multiplicity but deductive from an axiomatic unity."[85] Essence (*ousia*) of a thing, according to Aristotle, is what a thing is by its very nature, what makes it what it is, the thing in its truest sense, not in its accidental variation. "Therefore what we are seeking is the cause, i.e. the *form*, whereby the matter is some definite thing; and this is the *substance* of the thing."[86] "Now we cannot know the truth without the cause; that which imparts to other things a certain character itself has that character in the highest degree, so that what makes other things true is itself most true. Hence the principles of

[85] Coomaraswamy, *Coomaraswamy 2*, 423.

[86] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1956), 206 (Z.17.1041a9).

eternal things must be true above all things; for they are not merely *sometimes* true, nor is there any cause of their being, but they themselves are the cause of the existence of other things, so that as each thing is in respect of being, so is it in respect of truth."[87]

There is another remarkable observation of Aristotle's in his *Nicomachean Ethics* which is highly relevant here: "For virtue preserves, while vice destroys, the first principle, and in conduct the first principle is the *end*, just as in mathematics the first principles are the assumptions. Neither in moral nor in mathematical science is the knowledge of first principles reached by logical means: it is virtue, whether natural or acquired by habituation, that enables us to think rightly about the first principle."[88] Indeed "contemptation would seem to be the only activity that is appreciated for its own sake; because nothing is gained from it except the act of contemplation, whereas from practical activities we expect to gain something more or less over and above the action."[89] St. Thomas in his Commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* reaffirms the same point emphasizing contemplation as the end of action: "The whole of political life

[87] Ibid., 362 (a.1.993b23–31).
[88] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 245 (7.8, 1151a15–18).
[89] Ibid., 329 (10.7, 1177b1–4).

seems to be ordered with a view to attaining the happiness of contemplation. For peace, which is established and preserved by virtue of political activity, places man in a position to devote himself to contemplation of the truth."[90] Modern writers are not able to appreciate the transcendent and suprahuman element in traditional virtues because they seem to have resolutely set themselves against metaphysics and firmly, almost blindly, believe in the ultimate validity of practical life and the pragmatic point of view.

In the present essay we have tried to examine the genesis, nature, and implications of the modern theories of value and provide a proper philosophical context for their critical assessment. We do not in any way mean to denounce human ideals and denigrate human dignity which, properly understood, consists in mirroring God's absolute and creative Goodness. In order to obviate any misunderstanding on this point we would like to close by citing a passage from Heidegger who, in spite of his self-professed antimetaphysical stance, stands nearer to the spirit of tradition and metaphysics than ordinarily supposed:

[90] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* 10.11, no. 2102; quoted in Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation* (London: Faber & Faber, 1958), 99.

To think aganist "values" is not to maintain that everything interpreted as "a value"—"culture," "art," "science," "human dignity," "world," and "God"—is valueless. Rather, it is important finally to realize that precisely through the characterization of something as "a value" what is so valued is robbed of its worth. That is to say, by the assessment of something as a value what is valued is admitted only as an object for man's estimation. But what a thing is in its Being is not exhausted by its being an object, particularly when objectivity takes the form of value. Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be. Rather, valuing lets beings: be valid—solely as the objects of its doing. The bizarre effort to prove the objectivity of values does not know what it is doing. When one proclaims "God" the altogether "highest value," this is a degradation of God's essence. Here as elsewhere thinking in values is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being. To think against values therefore does not mean to beat the drum for the valuelessness and nullity of beings. It means rather to bring the clearing of the truth of Being before thinking, as against subjectivizing beings into mere objects."[91] *

[91] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1994), 251.

Epilogue

ONE

Although it is almost unavoidable to render λόγος, λογισμός, λογιστικός by "Reason" and "reasonable," the notion of an infallible Calculus is what is really implied, and it must be clearly understood that the Platonic "Reason" is by no means our "rationality," but much rather Aristotle's "Mind of the mind," the Mind that is "always right" (*De anima* III.10, 33a.27), and the Scholastic *Synteresis, Intellectus vel Spiritus*, than it is our "mind" or "reasoning power" that forms opinions and acts accordingly. Already for Boethius, reason is a mortal faculty, and when he calls himself a "reasoning and mortal animal," Philosophia rejoins that he has forgotten Who he is. The greater part of what is nowadays called "knowledge" is based on nothing better than statistics, and its "facts" are only what we "make" of these; the greater part of modern education, therefore has little or nothing to do with man's last end, *s'eternar.*

A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Commaraswamy 2 : Selected Papers–Metaphysics*, ed. Roger Lipsey (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1977), 366 n. 105.

TWO

Fallen man is simultaneously squeezed and torn assunder by two pseudo-absolutes: the ponderous "I" and the dissipating "thing", the subject and the object, the *ego* and the world. As soon as he wakes up in the morning man remembers who he is; and straightway he thinks of one thing or another; between *ego* and object there is a link, which is usually action, so that a ternary is implicit in the phrase: "I—do—this" or, what amounts to the same thing: "I—want—this". *Ego*, act and thing are in effect three idols, three screens hiding the Absolute; the sage is one who puts the Absolute in the place of these three terms; it is God within him who is the transcendent and real Personality, and is hence the Principle of his "I". His act is then the affirmation of God, in the widest sense, and his object is again God; it is this that is realized, in the most direct way possible, by quintessential prayer or concentration, which embraces, virtually or effectively, the whole life and the whole world. In a more external and more general sense, every man ought to see the three elements "subject," "act" and "object" in God, as far as he is enabled to do so through his gifts and through grace.

Frithjof Schuon, *Lights on the Ancient Worlds* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books, 1965), 50.

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